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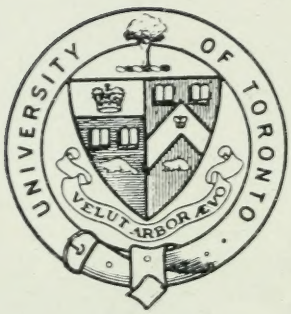

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MY ADVENTURES IN THE CONGO

Marguerite Doty

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MY ADVENTURES IN THE CONGO

Africa

BY

MARGUERITE ROBY

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

PRESENTATION COPY

LONDON
EDWARD ARNOLD
1911

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IT HAD BEEN MY INTENTION TO DEDICATE THIS BOOK TO ONE OF THE NOBLEST AND KINDEST OF MEN, BUT ERE THE LAST WORD HAD BEEN WRITTEN NEWS OF HIS UNTIMELY AND SUDDEN DEATH REACHED ME FROM BRITISH EAST AFRICA.

I THEREFORE REVERENTLY INSCRIBE THIS RECORD OF A JOURNEY, THE LATTER PART OF WHICH HE DID SO MUCH TO BRIGHTEN BY A THOUSAND ACTS OF KINDNESS AND THOUGHTFUL HOSPITALITY, TO THE MEMORY OF LEWIS H. CUBITT, LATE DISTRICT COMMISSIONER AT FORT PORTAL.

MARGUERITE ROBY.

London, 1911.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	I ENTER DOMESTIC SERVICE, AND EVENTUALLY FIND MYSELF IN THE CONGO	1
II.	FROM LUEMBE TO LUKAFU	19
III.	FROM LUKAFU TO LAKE MWERO . . .	37
IV.	I PART FROM THE TRADER, REACH PWETO, AND MEET WITH SOME BUSH EXPERIENCES . . .	53
V.	MORE BUSH ADVENTURES. MY FIRST ELEPHANT. LUKONZOLWA AND LUSAKA	73
VI.	THE MISSION AT BAUDOUINVILLE. LAKE TANGANYIKA. AN EVENTFUL SHOOT	90
VII.	UJIJI AND UVIRA	107
VIII.	I EXPERIMENT IN "FORCED LABOUR" . . .	125
IX.	NYA LUKEMBA AND BOBANDANA	143
X.	THE BATTLE OF NALIMLO, AND THE LAVA FOREST	160
XI.	MY BOATMEN MUTINY ON LAKE ALBERT EDWARD	177

CHAPTER PAGE

XII. MY EXPERIENCES AT KASSENDI, AND AFTERWARDS, INCLUDING SOME GOOD SPORT . . . 194

XIII. I REACH FORT PORTAL, AND MEET WITH GREAT KINDNESS 211

XIV. I RESUME MY MARCH, AND MEET WITH FRESH DIFFICULTIES 228

XV. THE HOME TRAIL 245

XVI. THE CONGO AND ITS CRITICS 263

XVII. THE CONGO AND ITS CRITICS (*continued*) . . 280

XVIII. THE CONGO AND ITS CRITICS (*concluded*) . . 297

INDEX 310

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

PORTRAIT OF THE AUTHOR . . . *Frontispiece*

FACING PAGE

LEAVING CHINSENDA 22

SAYING GOODBYE TO VICE-GOVERNOR AT ELIZABETHVILLE . 28

LEAVING ELIZABETHVILLE WITH GUN-BEARER AND BICYCLE-RUNNER 28

LILANDA, A "POOR" CHIEF, WHO PROVIDED FOOD FOR TWO HUNDRED PORTERS AT A FEW HOURS' NOTICE . . 32

A CHIEF WHO SAID HE HAD NOTHING TO SMILE AT . . 32

MRS. ROBY GIVING OUT FOOD TO HER PORTERS . . 40

RETURNING FROM THE PICNIC AT LUKAFA . . . 40

THE BOAT IN WHICH I TRAVELLED UP LAKE MWERO . . 50

MRS. ROBY AND TWO OF HER PORTERS WITH TAMED WILD CAT, AND MARABOUT SHOT BY HER. (CAT IS ALIVE) . 50

A NATIVE LAUNDRY: WOMEN AT WORK AT MISSION AT BAUDOUINVILLE 90

VIEW OF THE CHURCH AND MISSION GROUNDS AT BAUDOUINVILLE 90

TREE AT UJIJI WHERE STANLEY AND LIVINGSTONE MET . 108

ARRIVING AT UJIJI 108

FACING PAGE

VIEW FROM TOP OF MOUNT CAMANEOLA . . . 144

MEN AND WOMEN DANCING AT BOBANDANA . . . 148

NATIVES BRINGING IN BAMBOO, RUBBER, ETC., FOR TRADING PURPOSES 148

A LOVELY VIEW ON LAKE KIVU, WITH ANCONA CATTLE IN FOREGROUND 150

THE BOAT IN WHICH I TRAVELLED FOR FOUR DAYS ON LAKE KIVU 154

LEAVING LUVUNGI 154

BUCK SHOT *EN ROUTE* TO VITSHUMBI 174

THE CANNIBAL CHIEF'S LAST STAND AT THE "BATTLE OF NALIMLO" 174

WILD PIG, DAIKAR, AND AIGRETTE SHOT ON LAKE GEORGE . 178

HAWK, WITH MONKEY AND PARROT IN BACKGROUND . . 178

ELEPHANT HUNTER AT KASSENDI 198

BASKET-SELLERS AT FORT PORTAL 198

THOMAS, MRS. ROBY'S "BOY," STANDING AGAINST A LION TRAP 220

MR. CUBITT AND THE KING OF TORO AT FORT PORTAL . 220

RIPPON FALLS, THE SOURCE OF THE NILE . . . 256

MAP . . . . . AT END

My Adventures in the Congo

CHAPTER I

I ENTER DOMESTIC SERVICE, AND EVENTUALLY FIND MYSELF IN THE CONGO

NO dreams of big game or of lonely travels in the heart of Central Africa tinged my imagination when, towards the end of 1909, I set out from Merry England for a trip to the Antipodes; although I admit that a thirst for adventure and new experiences had something to do with my original expedition.

This you will more readily believe when I tell you that I set out *incog.* (to the intense delight of my bosom chums) as maid to a certain titled lady who was going out with her daughter, son-in-law, and their two children, with whose welfare I was entrusted. So you see there were decided possibilities in the situation, and these were realised from the very start, for my employers had not previously seen me, another daughter in England having actually engaged me for the position.

Well, I left the Savoy at 10 a.m. in a friend's motor, and arrived at the station in rather a funk

lest some friend, not in the secret, might be there and give the game away. But Fate was kind, and soon I saw Miss X, one of my employers, to whom I gave a respectful "Good morning, madam," and presented her with a bunch of roses, which she divided with Lady X and her nieces. When we arrived at Tilbury I gave a porter my dressing-case and a small box to put on the tender, but found, when I got aboard, that he had placed them on a seat beside Lady X and her daughters. Miss X was gazing at my things in amazement, so I lifted them down, and when we arrived at the steamer, carried both on board myself, with thumping heart.

I quickly commenced my duties by unpacking the young ladies' things, until Lady X told me to wait till after we were under way. Both children took to me very kindly, and began to show me all their treasures and tell me about their home life. I could see that Lady X and her party were much exercised in their minds about me, and the fact caused me considerable amusement, which of course I discreetly kept to myself. I fell into the "Miss," "Sir," and "Madam" like a regular old hand, however, and this seemed to set their fears at rest somewhat.

I shared a cabin with the children, and had not been asleep long that first night when I was awakened by the youngest child crying out, "Oh, Henderson, I've lost my baby!" I could not remember all at once where I was, but turned up the light, and presently discovered the said "baby" in the shape of a big rag-doll which was reclining gracefully on the floor of the cabin. Having re-

stored the treasure to its owner, with many internal blessings, I turned in again, wondering whether this would occur nightly, and, if so, how often each night!

I started the next day well by having a tussle with the stewardess, who did not want to bring me a cup of coffee. She told me that *servants'* breakfast was served at 7.45; however, after a short but wordy war, I got my coffee. During the day I asked Miss X if I might take my meals with the passengers, pointing out that as I was a first-class passenger it seemed a pity not to have the benefit thereof. To this she agreed, on condition that I sat with the children during their meals, which was no hardship, as they were both charming little folk.

After lunching with the passengers a steward told me that the purser wished to see me. When I got to his room he seemed greatly surprised at my appearance, asked me to sit down, and then told me how the other maids were jealous because I did not take my meals with them. He was easier to deal with than the stewardess, and, squeezing my hand, said, "Whenever you want anything, come to me." This was very gratifying.

That night I was again awakened by one of the youngsters crying to go to her sister, so I had to get up and put her into her sister's bunk. Next morning the stewardess brought me a cup of coffee, some hot water, and an ingratiating smile, which told me plainly that the purser had been talking to her! In the afternoon I made the acquaintance of a nice woman and her husband, who, I found, lived up in North-Eastern Rhodesia, but I did not guess just then how this fact would influence my movements

during the next twelve months. After dinner I was passing Lady X's chair when she called, "Henderson, come and have a cup of tea with me." I nearly fell overboard, but managed to reply, "Thank you, madam," and went and sat beside her. She told me how delicate she was, &c., &c., and was really quite sweet with her nice gentle voice. But presently "Miss Hilda" came along, and, seeing me seated, glared at me; so I got up, said good-night, and retreated to bed.

Once more I was awakened by one of the children, and answered the call with a sweetness of temper which was most surprising (to me). In the morning "Miss Hilda" came to the cabin and said, "Henderson, we only want you to sit with the children during their meals. When they have finished they are to come to Mamma and me. Should we wish you to look after them at any other time, we will send them to you." Oh dear, such a tone of voice, too! The temperature dropped to freezing-point on the spot, and her eye seemed to say, "Remember, you are the maid, and must not be too familiar with your young mistresses!"

That day I had another talk with my new Rhodesian friends, who invited me to go and stop with them after the wet season for a couple of months' shooting. They talked to me about a certain lady traveller's Cape to Cairo trip, which, they said, was not all it had seemed, since the lady had Europeans with her all the time, travelled on the main road, and certainly could not have kept herself supplied with fresh meat, shot by herself, considering the oldest settler is unable to accomplish such a feat upon the route which she took.

They suggested that, after visiting them, I should take thirty "boys" and go on a long trek alone through the Congo, but they warned me that it would be lonely work, with no white person to be seen for miles and miles and miles, only one's black boys; and that when one got a dose of fever one's guns must be unloaded and put out of reach!

In addition to this direct invitation, my thoughts had been turned towards the Congo through having read a couple of books, while on board, in which numerous fearful atrocities, said to have been committed by the Belgians upon natives, were set forth in lurid detail. So deeply did these "crimes" impress me that I was already growing anxious to view the scenes of such atrocities with my own eyes, and therefore listened the more readily to all that my new friends said.

Before we reached Cape Town I had made up my mind to visit Rhodesia and the Congo in the following June, and before my friends disembarked I had obtained a list of the necessities for my proposed expedition. From Cape Town I wrote home for a ·303 Enfield sporting rifle, a ·22 Winchester, and a 12-bore shotgun, with ammunition, to be sent out to me, and bade my friends goodbye, or rather *au revoir*, promising faithfully to turn up at the appointed time.

Meanwhile the fun on board had not slackened, and I continued to enjoy the situation immensely. A funny incident that happened early in the voyage was when the ship's doctor came and sat beside me, in order, apparently, to say nice things. Of course, I was very much flattered, and we got on so well that it was not long before he commenced a charm-

ing flirtation, which, alas! was brought to a tragic and untimely end by my remarking sweetly, "But are you sure that you ought to be talking to me? Do you know I am Lady X's maid?" Poor man! he looked as though an electric shock had passed through him, and leaping to his feet in great agitation, suddenly discovered that he had a frightfully important appointment—apparently at the very far end of the ship! My innocent remark appeared to shatter his dream completely, for when I met him afterwards he would scarcely answer my "good morning" at all. I was dreadfully sorry for him.

Upon another day a wonderful thing happened. Miss X stood and talked to me on deck for a time just as though I was a friend of hers. I was just beginning to get a bad dose of swollen head when two of the women passengers happened to approach us, and my young mistress quickly exclaimed in a loud voice, "Henderson, carry the two rugs into my cabin!" And, being an obedient servant, I did so.

On the other hand, Lady X was charming to me, and I liked her immensely. The children continued to wake me up at night, and I made rapid steps in the direction of becoming a second Job, so angelic did my patience become.

As we neared Australia I began to wonder how I was to fill in the seven months that must elapse before my visit to Africa, and eventually, with the help of the nicest man on board, I arranged a trip round the South Sea Islands, which could be made to fill in the time nicely.

Having completed my duties as maid, therefore, I became a wanderer once more; but I was not un-

mindful of my approaching Congo expedition, and did my best to pick up some of my kit at the places which I visited. What I wanted to get was a shooting suit of heavy khaki, but, if you will believe me, I tried in vain to get this at Sydney, Melbourne, and Auckland. Even for an ordinary lady's shooting suit the tailors in these parts demanded a price which would have got me a magnificent ball dress in degenerate Europe, and my blood ran cold at the figures these gentry asked. And then, while travelling amongst the South Sea Islands, I actually came upon the khaki I wanted at Samoa, of all places in the world.

Having got the material was certainly a step in the right direction, but I was not yet at the end of my difficulties, since it was now necessary to find some one to make it up. I broached the knotty question to a Samoan official, and he suggested a Chinese tailor. We approached the Celestial, who replied, with cheerful honesty, that he had never made a lady's shooting suit in his life, but was perfectly willing to try. So we let him try, after giving him careful instructions, to which he listened with polite intelligence.

In due course the suit turned up, and, barring the fit and a few other drawbacks, it was all right. The breeches weren't exactly a Bond Street fit; they did not come up high enough behind, and the buttons were all put on upon the wrong side, so that the opening between buttons and buttonholes gaped forward. The gaiters, which I had told him particularly must button down the *sides* of the legs, buttoned down the shin bone, and so if I had to creep on my hands and knees the buttons would of course hurt me.

He therefore had another try, and by putting in a fresh piece of stuff at the back of the pants made the wearer of these garments appear to be possessed of a tail! I left it at that, feeling that further argument would be useless.

Of the adventures and experiences that I met with in the South Sea Islands I will not here speak, but will skip these months and pass on to May, 1910, on the 23rd of which month I arrived at Durban *en route* for Rhodesia and the Congo.

Here I was strongly advised to take a Madras "boy" who knew Swahili and could cook and clean guns. So I sought and found one in the hotel. We entered into lengthy negotiations, and though he asked high wages, I agreed to pay them, and he promised to come. I was told I should not be allowed to take an Indian through the Transvaal, but must ship him through Beira to meet me again at Broken Hill. I arranged all the details, and then, at the last moment, he asked if he could take his wife with him. I said No, and he then suggested that I should give him some money, to which I also said No, as I had begun to guess the truth by this time; which was that he did not intend to come at all, but thought he would do me down for a little cash all the same! Needless to say, I never set eyes on him again after leaving Durban.

My journey now was to Maritsburg; then I visited Ladysmith and Pretoria. Here I hired a motor, as I wanted to visit the grave of a friend near Boschoff, which they said was a ten-mile drive from Pretoria. The driver said he knew the way, and off we started; but there were two points which rather upset my calculations, one of which was that the driver did

not know the way, and the other that it was *not* a ten-mile drive, but considerably more. Our road seemed to lie "across country," and when we came to an obstacle we went over it, which added a distinct variety to the proceedings. Every stone, rock, stream, and kopje in the Transvaal appeared to me to have been collected and dropped down right across our path, and a monsoon in the Indian Ocean or the Bay of Biscay on a rough day would have been child's play beside that drive to Boschoff. One moment we were careering along the side of a hill at an angle of 45 degrees, and then, before you could wink, we would take a header down into some running stream, through which we would plunge with a reckless daring worthy of the Light Brigade. In fact, whenever the driver sighted a stream ahead, he would clap on full speed and we would "take it in our stride," so to speak.

Our brilliant progress was ultimately brought to a temporary close in the middle of a stream rather deeper and stonier than the others, and, after several unsuccessful efforts to budge, the driver left me alone in my glory while he went off to a Boer farm, which happened to be near by, for assistance. Several Boers came out in answer to his call, and, although they could not speak English, they were very kind and helped to pull the motor out on to dry land once more. After that we really did reach Boschoff, and actually did get back to Pretoria by six o'clock that evening.

I stayed a week at Johannesburg, and here made a further attempt to get a shooting suit built. I went with an officer I knew to a tailor whom he recommended as a first-class man, and while my friend

went off to be fitted for some clothes I was received by a retiring youth who blushed every time I addressed him. He managed to take my measurements, although the process seemed to cause him acute mental anguish, and promised to send me a canvas pattern of the breeches for me to try on. He did so, but when the pattern arrived I could not tell which was the back and which the front, and, though I returned it to him with further instructions, when it came back the second time it was still quite impossible. Time was growing short now, so, in desperation, I sought out my blushing youth, and handing him back his pattern, I suddenly dropped my skirt and stood revealed before him in an old pair of shooting breeches. He nearly fainted on the spot, and took several minutes to recover. Then, pulling himself together, he took the necessary measurements, and, promising me "a perfect fit," ushered me out of the shop, with a sigh of relief.

He kept his word, for when the shooting suit ultimately reached me (at Broken Hill) I nearly did have a fit. The coat, which was to have been very light, weighed 3½ lbs., and would have been a nice fit for a man of not less than six feet, and the breeches were in proportion. I sent them all back, with a letter to the head of the firm, giving my height, weight, and full dimensions, but he evidently did not believe me, for when they were returned yet again the coat sleeves were so short that I thought I was putting on a ball dress, while the coat hung down like an apron in front and fitted like an Eton jacket behind. I had asked for a small revolver pocket in the breeches, and he had built one—a quarter of a yard square, under the obvious impression that I carried my

elephant gun there! In the end I returned the whole suit to him, finally and for ever, feeling that life was too short for the question ever to be settled.

At Johannesburg I received a letter from my friend at Broken Hill, saying that she considered it unsafe for me to venture through the Congo alone, and that she had therefore arranged for a well-known white trader to act as my escort. I was to pay him so much a month for coming with me, for porters, food, tent, &c., &c., and was to give him a list of the provisions I required.

Before leaving Johannesburg for Broken Hill I was "done" by the hotel porter, to whom I gave a sovereign in payment of an account. The fellow disappeared into a dark corner, and presently reappeared with a bad sovereign, which he swore I had given him. Thus are we caught napping at times!

At one of the stations near Bulawayo we came upon a scene of great excitement, as a day or so before one of the mounted police, while going his rounds, had ridden into a little family of twenty lions, and the story of his hairbreadth escape, pursued by the roaring brutes for many miles, had set every one lion-mad. I gathered that lions in that district were about as tame as sparrows in London, so I went out with my camera to get a few pictures before the creatures were wiped out, but had no luck at all, and continued my journey while the bloodthirsty residents polished up their rifles for the forthcoming slaughter.

At Victoria Falls a few days before my arrival two men and their wives, with one child, had been upset by hippopotami while picnicking on the Zambesi in a couple of canoes. One woman shed her clothes in the water and swam to an island, and a black boy,

who had saved life before, rescued the child, while one of the men also escaped. But the other man and woman were drowned.

After this fatality the Government gave orders for all the hippos on the Zambesi to be destroyed, and a hunter was specially engaged for the task. He got on all right for a time, and then, one day while pursuing one hippo, another charged his canoe, sending his rifles and ammunition to the bottom.

At Victoria Falls I woke up one day with a dose of fever, so wrote to say that I would not go on to Broken Hill until I got better; but my friend insisted upon my joining her, so I started off, although I was obliged to go to bed when I reached her house.

It was very kind of her to be so anxious for my company, but I cannot for the life of me understand why she got me to come on before I was well; for it appeared that she and her husband were going off for a ten days' big-game shooting, and would have to leave me behind in charge of their black boys. This I strongly objected to, and the end of it was that, after a week in bed, I was carried down to the station at 9 p.m. one night and sent back with the doctor to Livingstone, a thirty-six hours' journey!

As the train steamed out of Broken Hill Station the doctor—a dear, kind little Scotchman—came into my compartment to give me some quinine, and I, feeling very miserable and half-delirious, murmured, "Oh, Doctor, please sit down and hold my hand; I am so lonely!" This frightened the poor little man to such an extent that he dropped the cup he was holding and dashed out of the compartment as though Old Nick were at his heels!

At Livingstone I went into hospital, where I stayed a week, and then had a week's convalescence at the hotel, every one being exceedingly kind to me during the time I stayed here.

On the morning of the day when I was to return once more to Broken Hill, I was told that the trader with whom I was to travel had come into Livingstone, so I sent him a message, and he called at my hotel. When I saw him I was very much struck with his resemblance to Cutcliffe Hyne's Captain Kettle, bar the fact that his eyes were set too close together, which gave the face a sinister look. We had a short talk, and he promised to call on me at Broken Hill, whither I now returned.

Here Thomas enters on the scene—Thomas, my faithful black boy, to whom I undoubtedly owe my life. He was a Mission boy from Blantyre, who spoke good English and understood waiting on a lady, as well as being a perfect cook. He had heard that I wanted a boy, and when I asked him if he would like to go into the Congo for many months, he replied, "If the Missisi like Thomas after few days he will go anywhere with her."

I did like him "after a few days," so my friends wrote to the Government official at Livingstone, asking whether I could take Thomas with me. To this the official reply was that, as I was going into the Sleeping Sickness districts, they could not allow me to do so. This Government refusal struck me as being particularly silly, because nearly all the labour in the Katanga district at that time consisted of Rhodesian natives!

However, when I explained matters to Thomas he said that he would be able to get into the train with-

out any one seeing him, and that he would follow Missisi wherever she went, and this, as you will presently see, he did.

I now had my first experience of big-game shooting, for you must understand that I had never done any in my life before, although a fairly good English game shot. My friends had arranged to go out for a week-end shoot, and I was sent on ahead to the camp in a machila, accompanied by twenty black men. This was my first ride in a machila,* and we went for 1½ hours through dense bush, to the lilting accompaniment of the bearers' songs. Of these the jolliest began thus:—

"Bwana Mkuba dola condo kali mi O!"
("The Great White Master is coming to make war on you,
So beware!")

and finished up with a regular warcry which would have curdled the blood of a person with "nerves." Sometimes the singers extemporised as they sang, expressing pious hopes that their master and mistress might make good bags in order that there might be plenty of meat to eat in camp; while in yet another ditty they declared that their master was coming out to shoot *with both his wives!*

We divided our party for hunting purposes, my hostess going off in one direction, while I accompanied her husband, who set off with his tracker and gun-bearers in another. We walked very quietly through the bush for an hour and a half before anything happened, and then the tracker pointed and we saw a small antelope about fifty yards away. It

* A hammock swung on one or two poles.

was a daikar, and my host, murmuring, "We must have meat for the boys to-night," raised his rifle and took very careful aim ; then fired. The daikar, quite unhurt, dashed away like lightning, while I sat down on the hard ground and shrieked with unsympathetic laughter until the tears ran down my cheeks.

As one shot frightens away all the game round about, there was nothing for it but to return to camp, which we did, in a somewhat chastened frame of mind, arriving at about 8.30, to find that my hostess had bagged a hartebeeste. We did not mention the daikar more than was necessary.

Next morning we set out at five o'clock, my hostess again going off on her own, and by lunch-time she had bagged another hartebeeste, while our score was again nil. In the afternoon, however, we accounted for ten or twelve pigeons and three brace of partridges, which cheered our drooping spirits a bit.

All this time the trader was recruiting porters in Northern Rhodesia, while I was becoming impatient to be off on our expedition. When I did hear from the trader he wrote from Bwana Mkuba, saying that he had recruited two hundred men, and advised me to bring plenty of blankets, as twice on this trip through Rhodesia he had had to break the ice in his basin.

I now set out for Bwana Mkuba in a goods train, which was filled with Belgian officials, for the line was not yet completed. We set out at 3 p.m., and were travelling until 3.30 next morning, but it was fairly comfortable.

Two or three hours out from Broken Hill we came to a standstill, and were all startled by the terrific

whistling of our engine. I looked out, and there, right in the middle of the line ahead, I saw two lions and a cub looking up calmly at the engine which had come to a halt about twenty yards from where they were sitting.

Nobody had a gun handy, and mine were packed up in cases in the middle of my biggest boxes. After much whistling the lions walked slowly off the permanent way, and then sat down again beside the line, from which position they watched the train steam away, with a grave dignity that was very funny.

At Bwana Mkuba I was met by the trader with a hot cup of tea, which was indeed welcome; and we settled to start on our expedition from Luembe.

I had met Mrs. Carter, wife of the English engineer at Luembe, while in Livingstone, and she had very kindly invited me to stay with her when I entered the Congo at this point. Next day a wire arrived from her, saying that she was coming down the line on a railway motor-trolley to carry me back with her next day, which was Sunday.

She called in the afternoon, and after tea we started on the open trolley for Luembe. It was a single line, and as we buzzed along on the narrow trolley through the gathering darkness, the effect was distinctly weird. All round us, for miles and miles, stretched the bush, shooting up in ghostly outline, like motionless regiments of misshapen giants standing to see us pass. Every now and then the roar of lions fell upon our ears, and sometimes, somewhere close to the line, we could hear the stealthy purring of leopards. Away through the night we dashed

forward at about twenty miles an hour along the deserted line. Then, as we crossed the border of North-Eastern Rhodesia and plunged into the Congo, a truly remarkable sight met my eyes—a striking first impression of Central Africa!

On ahead, as far as I could see along the line, hundreds of little yellow fires stabbed the night, and around the fires hundreds and hundreds of natives were huddled up, their black skins shining in the firelight. I asked what they were all doing here, and Mrs. Carter told me that her husband had had a slight misunderstanding with the Chartered Company, who, as a consequence, had stopped him from engaging Rhodesian labour; but that now matters had been set right, and that these were Rhodesian natives waiting for daylight to go further into the Congo to work.

At Luembe, the first station in the Congo, I got a permit to carry rifles, went through the Customs, and generally found the officials very courteous. This station had been opened two months before by Colonel Wangermee, the Belgian Vice-Governor-General of the Katanga, and his experiences form an amusing commentary on the alleged "forced labour" question, as put forward by some perfervid scribes.

On leaving Elizabethville, Colonel Wangermee was deserted by all his porters near Chinsenda, and had to send to Mr. Carter at Rail Head for men to bring him in. Imagine natives deserting a Governor-General in a country where forced labour is supposed to be rampant! The story of the Colonel's experience puzzled me considerably at the time, but I intended to be patient and keep my eyes open, for I meant to take photographs of any mutilations

or other evidences of tyranny which I might come across during my travels.

A few days later the trader joined me at Luembe, with two hundred porters and the stores, which latter, he assured me, comprised all the articles I had bargained for. Being, on occasion, of a somewhat trustful disposition, I did not think to check the stores with him, but took it for granted that he was bringing enough provisions to last us six months. I believed this the more readily because he knew that after leaving Elizabethville we could not get any but native food. How little did I know the gentleman into whose hands Fate had cast me!

CHAPTER II

FROM LUEMBE TO LUKAFU

AMONG other things, the trader had brought with him a machila for my benefit, in case I should fall sick *en route*. It was a very nice idea of his, but it did not work out in practice quite so prettily, as you shall presently see. He had also provided himself (if I may mention the fact without causing blushes) with a black wife, to whom I did not object, as I knew that I should have nothing to do with her. There was a native machila for her use.

Thus equipped, then, we started out on our travels early one morning, and trader and I on our bicycles, and the porters before and behind us, singing war-songs as they marched.

Our system of travel was to send a number of porters on ahead, whose duty it was to halt outside some village, or other spot, arranged beforehand, and erect our tents ready for our arrival at night. During the course of a day's march we moved forward in a long, irregular line, and sometimes the trader and I did not see one another for hours at a time, one or other of us having pressed on ahead or fallen behind, as the case might be.

On leaving Luembe, however, we rode together, and the trader entertained me with many reminiscences of the time when he was native commissioner in Rhodesia. Of course I asked him about mutilation and atrocities in the Congo, and he replied that these things had been grossly exaggerated. If I liked, he said, we could cross the border into North-Eastern Rhodesia, where he would show me two mutilated persons for every one I should find in the Congo.

Mutilations, he explained, are the result of tribal wars; also, when Arabs and Mohammedans trade in the country, unless the native will do what the trader wants, the latter mutilates him and his family.

Our conversation was frequently interrupted by my taking a header from my machine, which was a free-wheel. I had never ridden one of these before, and my early experiences made me feel that I never wanted to ride one again. I seemed to have no control over the wretched thing, and spent quite as much time on the ground as in the saddle.

If I saw a native within ten yards I was absolutely certain to fall off, while a twig or stone in the path was the immediate signal for another involuntary and violent descent. Again and again, in desperation, I made up my mind that I *would* surmount the next obstacle that presented itself, and when the next ant-hill or bush hove in view I rode at it with clenched teeth and a charming uncertainty as to whether I was going over it, round it, into it, or on to it. To turn a corner was an exceedingly hazardous enterprise, from which I seldom emerged in those early days without some painful bodily

reminder. A clump of wait-a-bit thorn at one of these corners formed a temptation which I was quite powerless to resist, and by the time I had got myself out of the thorns and the thorns out of myself the main body was generally a mile or so ahead of me.

After a short course of this vigorous practice as knockabout artiste my unfortunate figure resembled an intricate map picked out artistically in blue and black. But still I stuck to my task heroically. I found that if I made one of the runners go on ahead of me and call out what rocks there were to be negotiated, I did not fall off quite so often; and, indeed, upon one joyful afternoon I rode for several hours thus without once leaving the saddle. Filled with a sense of elation, I began to hum a tune of triumph, on which the trader, who happened to be riding behind me, exclaimed, "You're getting on very well!" And directly he spoke I fell off.

Well, for four or five days we continued our march, sometimes passing through Rhodesia and sometimes through the Congo, as we were travelling along the border-lines of the two countries. There was not much game to be seen, for since the railway had come the employees on the line had been shooting night and morning, frightening the animals away for miles. The trader did, however, get an occasional buck, to the great satisfaction of the porters.

On the sixth day we reached Chinsenda, where the trader had another store, and here more porters were awaiting us. My companion advised me to choose sixteen boys for my machila, so I did this, dividing them up according to their heights, in order

that I might be carried in comfort, and giving them different coloured jerseys, one colour for those who were to carry the front part and another colour for those who were to carry the back part of the machila. While I chose them the trader stood beside me and explained about the jerseys, when one boy pointed to his foot and said that he could not carry a machila. The trader at once stepped back and gave him two swinging blows with his fist. I was so disgusted that I at once went into my tent, where the trader presently appeared to apologise for having lost his temper, although he asserted that the boy deserved it; a point on which I begged to differ. At any rate, the boy deserted that night, not forgetting to take my jersey with him.

We could not move on again at once, as we had to wait for some more porters who had been engaged, but had not yet turned up, to carry the trader's merchandise with which he was going to trade for rubber in the Congo.

While here I heard the story of Prince Albert, now King of Belgium, and his porters. The trader had got the porters who brought the Prince down from Bwana Mkuba to the frontier of the Congo. They brought him thus far, but no further, for here they put down his luggage and refused to go one step forward, saying, "You asked us to bring him to his own country, and we have done so." The trader offered them all sorts of rewards if they would only bring the royal luggage as far as Elizabethville. Indeed, for two hours he exercised his powers of persuasion upon them, but when he had finished all they said was, "Thank you very much. Good-bye!" and so departed. In the end porters were

Leaving Chinsenda.

obtained from the Star of the Congo mines, and these men consented to carry the luggage to Elizabethville on condition the trader came with them.

Thus are the horrors of forced labour witnessed in the blood-stained Congo!

The engaging and loading up of porters was our chief business at Chinsenda, and quite a business it was too. The load which each man had to carry was carefully weighed out, and a ticket with the number and weight of the load was then given to him. I watched the process with interest for a time, and then mounted that dreadful free-wheel and rode (?) up to the parade ground to see the soldiers drilling and shooting. I am not a military expert, but they seemed very smart at their drill, and I took several photographs of them, not having yet discovered any "atrocities" to snap.

I now began to get bored and anxious to move on, and told the trader that I meant to set out alone, but he agreed to leave the rest of the work for his partner to finish off, and so we both started off the following morning.

The day's march passed off uneventfully, but between five and six that evening the trader and I started out to look for big game. We set out through the bush, with trackers and gun-bearers, in single file, and as we went I was able to observe some of the little tricks employed by the tracker. If he wanted to make sure of the direction of the wind, he would scrape up some dust with his bare toe and watch how it moved. In approaching a branch or other obstacle in the path he would tap his right or left thigh to show those behind which side the

obstacle lay. And all the time we would be slowly winding our way forward in complete silence.

After a long time the tracker pointed to the ground and muttered "Spoor fresh!" We went a little further, and then he suddenly stood still and pointed, and, looking between the branches, I saw the horns and part of the head of a buck showing, about 150 yards away. The trader said, "Eland! Shoot!" But being bashful, and not wishing to display my ignorance, I replied, "No, you shoot!"

He put up his peep-sight, took careful aim, and brought the buck down. Then the natives ran forward, and, finding the beast not dead, one of them finished it off with a single blow from his spear. We then returned to camp and sent out porters to bring in the meat, which was cut up into two hundred small pieces, one for each man.

Next morning when we struck camp I moved off into the bush, with two gun-bearers, intent on slaughter; but all I could find was a regular family party of guineafowl, which ran on ahead of me through the undergrowth, chuckling as they went, as much as to say, "You'd like us to get up, but we know a trick worth two of that—ha! ha!"

I got so wild with the little brutes at last that I put up my gun and fired into the long grass to flush them. As luck would have it, they did not rise until I had reloaded, so when they did get up I was able to give them both barrels, and had the satisfaction of bringing down a right and left, much to the joy of my boys, who greeted my performance with glad cries of "The Bibi can shoot meat! The Bibi can shoot meat!"

Indeed, during my earlier attempts at big-game

shooting the boys caused me no little amusement, for whenever I missed, which was not seldom, they would look at each other as much as to say, "She is no good!" whereas, later on, when the animals began to get in the way of my bullets, their appreciation was as comforting as their former disapproval had been embarrassing.

We were now approaching Lilanda's village, and the trader sent on a message to the chief, asking that food might be ready for us. We encamped in the bush outside the village, and while sitting in front of our fire, the chief Lilanda and his headmen came in, and, with many clappings of the hands, told the trader that they had no food to sell.

It is *infra dig.* for a white person to speak direct to a chief about business, and the conversation that followed was conducted through a third person. Lilanda having declared that he had no food, the trader replied that he must find some. "This lady," the trader explained, "is a great Princess who has come to see the chiefs of the Congo and their people. Must this lady and her porters go without food because Lilanda says he has none?"

When Lilanda again replied that he had no food, I made up a little story about China, which was interpreted by the trader's messenger. "In that far country when a great lady asks a chief for food," I said (here Lilanda asked if he might sit by the fire, and we motioned him to a seat), "if the chief refuses her, she takes him and his great men to a greater chief, who ties him up high in a tree, and fastens a brazier with fire above him and another below his feet, until he gives orders for

his men to bring in food. Would Lilanda like this done to him?" I asked.

With a ready wit, for which I was not prepared, Lilanda answered, glancing at his toes, "My feet are very warm and comfortable where they are! But if the Bibi Bwana will give Lilanda one hour, he will look again for food." I answered, "If it be not found, Lilanda, when I am asleep, if my porters should wander to the village and take what they find, Lilanda must not seek payment from me."

He then departed, and within the hour we had food for two hundred porters, for which he was paid next morning in rugs, cloths, wire, salt and money. The payment seemed small to me, but the chief went off quite satisfied.

About two days later, near Chiwanda village, I sallied forth once more in the wild hope of bagging some big game. This time the first game we sighted was a hartebeeste—at least, all I could see was a pair of horns which they assured me belonged to a hartebeeste. In reply to the trader's exhortation to "Shoot!" I raised my rifle and looked through the near sight until the horns appeared beyond it. Then I pulled the trigger—and saw my bullet enter the ground about twenty yards away from where I was standing! I had forgotten all about the fore-sight.

The tracker looked distinctly hurt; I flung down my weapon and swore I'd never shoot again; while the hartebeeste, apparently quite untroubled, moved a few yards away from where he had been standing. The trader now put up his rifle and brought the animal down; then hastened to assure me that in a few days' time I should be shooting quite well.

This sounded very encouraging, but I had my doubts, all the same, and returned to camp in a sad and humble frame of mind.

We were now nearing Elizabethville, and one of the porters, a mere boy, was brought to me by the trader, as he had fallen sick. I gave him some medicine and told him to go back to the fire and keep warm, as I found he had dysentery; but next morning, to my amazement, I discovered that the trader had given him a dose of salts after he had been treated by me. Of course the wretched boy grew much worse, and although we did manage to get him to Elizabethville alive, he died in hospital there. One night when he was very bad, I gave him some morphia, and so he got a night's rest; and next morning he said, "If the Bibi give me more of that I can carry my load." Poor fellow!

One day, on our way to camp, we came upon a native who was digging into an ant-heap, so we stopped to ask him what he was after. He said he was digging for rats, but we soon saw that he was really after ground squirrels. He would dig two holes, one on each side of the ant-heap, and cover one with a net; then, taking a bunch of twigs, he would set fire to these and then push them into the second hole, and so smoke the squirrels out. He wanted the animals for food—and so did our porters, but we would not let them take his spoils from this hunter, and left him to continue his operations unmolested.

We camped in the bush outside Elizabethville, and had breakfast at the store of another trader the first morning. I was invited to lunch by

Governor Wangermee, and, putting on European clothes, set out in my machila. To my surprise, a few minutes before luncheon was announced the trader cycled up to the house, and came in and talked until the Governor had no alternative but to ask him to join the party. The man's bad taste in thrusting himself upon our host rather disgusted me, and I was secretly delighted when the Governor gave me a permit to shoot elephant, but only a licence for trading in rubber to the trader.

It was now I noticed that Thomas was unhappy. I asked him what was the matter, and he replied that he did not like the Bwana's boy. "Stay with the cook, who is of your own country," I told him, "and keep away from the boy." And I thought no more about it. We started on our ten days' march to the next post, but our journey was no longer as pleasant as before. The trader ceased to be courteous to me—in fact, he seemed to take pleasure in making things uncomfortable.

He would send on the cooking things before I was up in the morning, and then excuse himself by saying that the porters must travel in the cool of the day. On the second day out some porters deserted, so I lent him some of my machila carriers rather than let his merchandise be left behind.

That same day we came upon a body of porters carrying bicycles. One of their number was lying full length on the ground, apparently dead. I found that he still breathed, however, and gave him an injection of digitalis and strychnine, afterwards pouring a little brandy between his teeth. His breathing became more regular and his heart-beats stronger, and when Thomas had made a

Leaving Elizabethville with gun-bearer and bicycle-runner.

Saying good-bye to the Vice-Governor at Elizabethville.

fire and some tea, we gave him this. Then I had him wrapped in a blanket, laid in my machila, and taken to the nearest village, where we gave the chief a piece of meat and some salt to look after him.

On the third day, after the porters had started, my gun-bearer said, "We can shoot here; plenty meat!" So I broke my former vows, and determined to try my luck once more, remembering the fore-sight this time! For one and a half hours we crept through the bush, and then, oh joy! we saw a herd of bush buck. They were feeding, and we had to crawl round behind various trees to get into a favourable position.

At last this was accomplished, and I dropped on one knee, and rested an elbow on the other knee, in real businesslike style. Next I took careful aim at what I thought was the region of the heart, and fired. There was a curious sort of thud, and I saw them scamper off, while my boy rushed forward to where they had been standing. I followed him, although I was sure I had missed; but no, to my delight and surprise, I saw one actually lying on the ground. I had become a big-game shooter at last!

Mounting my bike, I soon overtook the trader, who sent back porters, while we stopped the kitchen for breakfast, and in half an hour two boys walked in with my first buck slung on a bamboo pole.

I called for Thomas, and the cook replied that he had deserted. For some time I could not believe it, but nevertheless it was the truth. The trader was furious, and swore that he would shoot the boy if he caught him. After breakfast he took his gun and

went off on his cycle, with his boy behind him on another, leaving me to continue the march alone until he should overtake me, with or without Thomas.

I set out with the two hundred porters, heavy-hearted to think that Thomas should have failed me so, and for two days I travelled thus. I had no difficulty with the men, who came to me to be treated for their various afflictions, such as dysentery, bronchitis, cut feet, bruises, &c.; but at the end of the second day I determined to await the coming of the trader, for I did not like this uncertainty as to the fate of Thomas, knowing, as I did, how violent and unreasonable the trader was when angry.

About noon the following day some porters came running in to say that the trader was returning, and about half an hour later he appeared, with his boy, tired out and travel-stained. He told me he had shot an eland, and gave directions for it to be brought in. "But where is Thomas?" I asked. "He is coming," replied my companion grimly. "But what happened?" I demanded. Then he told me.

He had, it appeared, gone back after the missing boy until he reached a stream near Elizabethville, on the banks of which he saw a white blotch through the bushes. He therefore made a detour, got across the stream lower down, and then came up on the opposite bank, where he presently found himself face to face with Thomas, who was drinking. He put up his gun and shouted. Thomas raised his head, and, without moving, said, "Shoot! I would rather die than be beaten."

The trader did not shoot, but stripped him of his

clothes, bar a loin cloth, gave him a heavy load to carry, and tied him to his own boy, so that a second escape was impossible. When Thomas reached camp, looking very ill and wretched, he was given twenty-five strokes with a stick (the trader wanted to use the chicotte,* but I refused to allow it). Then he was loaded up again, and chained to another porter, who remained at his side night and day, the trader promising his boy a good thrashing if Thomas escaped.

On September 1st I arrived first at the village of Mubutwa, Thomas and a few porters following close behind. I had not spoken to my boy since his desertion, but now he spoke to me, saying, "Missisi, shall I make cup of tea?" I did not answer at once, but soon afterwards the chief arrived, with some men carrying a large gourd of native beer. I gave some of this to the porters, and then, turning to Thomas, said, "Thomas, would you like some?" "Yes, please, Missisi," he answered; so I gave him some, and after he had drunk it, I asked, "Thomas, why did you desert?"

"Oh, Missisi," he replied, "because the Bwana was always saying he would give me chicotte, and so, being a Mission boy, and not having been beaten, I was frightened and run away. But if Missisi will take me back as her boy and not let me carry this load, which is killing me" (and I believed him) "I swear by Bible and anything I know of Christian Church I will never leave her again; I swear it!"

I said, "All right, Thomas, you are my boy again, and I will trust you."

* A whip made of hide.

When the trader heard that I had reinstated Thomas he was very indignant. He wanted to beat the boy again and make him carry the heaviest load possible, prophesying confidently that otherwise he would rob and desert me again at the very earliest opportunity. But I refused to be persuaded, and determined to trust Thomas—luckily for myself!

We were now nearing Lukafu, and outside one of the villages we met two hundred soldiers and two hundred porters, in charge of some Belgian officers. It looked to us as though our chances of obtaining food were somewhat remote, but the officers assured us that they had not bought all the food there was, and this proved to be the case, as we were able to purchase what we wanted.

The chief of the village was the happy possessor of nine wives, but I told him that, in my opinion, this was too many wives for any one man. But he shook his head, answering wistfully, "Ah, but a few years ago, when I was richer, I had twenty-five, and they were not too many!" After that I subsided.

Later on, wishing to get a photograph of him, I asked him to smile, upon which he rose to his feet, saying, "I have nothing to smile at." However, I took the photograph, and I think you will agree, after looking at the picture, that for a man with nothing to smile at he did not do so badly.

Meanwhile I was not forgetting my career as a sportswoman. True, I had not lately added to my big game record, not having been lucky enough to find any beast obliging enough to plant itself in the way of my somewhat erratic bullets. Amongst the birds, however, I had been doing pretty good

LILANDA, A "POOR" CHIEF, WHO PROVIDED FOOD FOR 200 PORTERS AT A FEW HOURS' NOTICE.

A CHIEF WHO SAID HE HAD NOTHING TO SMILE AT.

execution with my 12-bore. Not that this was altogether surprising, because I had done a good deal of game shooting in England, having sometimes even had the felicity of wiping the eye of quite good men shots, much to my own surprise and to their amusement.

There were many partridges in the bush, and these I used to walk up. It seemed like being at home! Then there were wild duck in the numerous swamps we passed, and they were much more obliging wild duck than those one meets with in the British Isles, for, after being flushed, they would fly round and round for a while, and then invariably come back to the very spot from which they had originally risen, so that one could get some really good sport out of them.

One day I was approaching one of these swamps when four wild geese got up, out of shot, and flew away. I moved on, hoping to flush some more, and had reached the spot where the four birds had risen when I saw them coming back again. I crouched down, and as they came swooping back to the water, blazed at them, and had the satisfaction of seeing one come down. My gun-boy waded in, like a retriever, and brought the bird to land, and for days afterwards the porters had goose feathers sticking in their curly locks.

We were now on the high-road to Lukafu, and I can honestly say that this Central African road would compare favourably with any of the coaching roads of England. When we came to within a mile of the town I got off my cycle and retired behind an ant-hill. Here I discarded the historic shooting-suit in favour of a European frock, and thus clothed and

in my right mind, rode into Lukafu, a model of cleanliness and respectability.

I was met by two officials, who conducted me to the guest-house, telling me, "The last person who slept here was Prince Albert." I was glad I had changed my clothes.

The chief official at Lukafu was Commandant Gheur, who was good enough to ask me to stay here another day, "for," he said, "we never see a white woman here, and it is so delightful to see you!" Greatly flattered, I accepted his invitation, and was admitted to the official mess.

I did not expect any particular excitement at nights when we were not in the bush, but this night at Lukafu proved rather an exception. To begin with, a terrific wind storm got up, and howled round the house until I thought that both house and self would be wafted to a happier clime.

While enjoying (?) the clatter of the hurricane, and wondering how much longer the house would hold together, I was still further aroused by the still small voice of the trader outside my window. It was not exactly the kind of night one would choose for singing serenades outside a lady's casement, and besides, serenades were not much in the trader's line, so I got up and called out to know what was the matter.

In response he unfolded a tale of woe to the effect that he had had a quarrel with one of the officials, who had called him a liar, a thief, and a swindler. I suppose it was a delicate compliment to come and tell me this interesting piece of news a quarter of an hour after midnight, and, taking it as such, I gave him the best advice I could, which was to demand

an apology from the too candid official, and if this was refused, to give the gentleman a thrashing next morning.

He retired, murmuring thanks and threats, and I went back to bed to reflect upon the trouble which some men experience in protecting that delicate exotic—their honour.

Having safely survived the night, I went to the mess-house next morning, where I discovered the trader and the "candid" official deep in friendly conversation, and apparently on the best of terms. I took an early opportunity of asking whether the gentleman had apologised or been thrashed, and was mildly astonished to discover that neither the one nor the other event had happened. When I asked about the apology, my trader answered magnanimously, "What's the use of asking him to apologise?" And as I could not find a fitting reply, the subject dropped into a verdant memory, for me, of man's power of forgiveness!

The event of this day was a picnic which was arranged to take place at the Lukafu Waterfall. It sounded an extremely nice proposal, and I pictured a quiet day of ease and luxury, reclining gracefully by the banks of some charming cascade. But, alas! it is a world of disappointments, and there was very little "beer and skittles" about this outing of ours.

To begin with, we had to reach the waterfall, and the path thither lay along the centre of a number of dried-up river-beds, which were covered with stones of all sizes. Then occasionally we had to cross running streams, over which my escort carried me in an impromptu chair, made by joining their hands together. At last, after heroic efforts, we did actually

arrive at the waterfall, only to find that the water had dried up, all but the merest trickle. However, we did have our picnic, which was something.

When the entertainment was over, we decided to resume our march, our road now being to Manda. The journey promised to be no joke, for the very first obstacle which w had to surmount was a great mountain, and, as I am not a brilliant mountaineer, the task of getting over that mountain did not fill me with any burning enthusiasm. But "needs must when the devil drives," so off we started, two of the officials saying they would come part of the way with us.

CHAPTER III

FROM LUKAFU TO LAKE MWERO

OUR programme was now to climb the great mountain that lay before us and encamp on the top that night. To revive my drooping spirits the officials assured me that Prince Albert had accomplished the ascent with a cigar between his teeth. This sounded very encouraging at the time, but I can assure you that, when it came to the point, I did *not* manage my climb in anything like such dignified fashion.

It was an abominably steep mountain, and I thought my heart would break long before I reached the top. Over and over again I had to rest, and before very long the conviction that I was not meant for a mountaineer forced itself upon my aching brain. The greater part of my progress was carried out with the aid of my friends, the Belgian officials, the method of proceedings being as follows. One of them stood above me and stretched out a helping hand, while the other stood below and pushed me firmly but kindly upwards! I do not know whether this style of ascent would pass muster in strict mountaineering circles, but it proved quite effective in the present instance.

After going steadily up and up and up for what seemed to me a perfect lifetime, we at length really did find ourselves on the summit of that wretched mountain, and I crawled into camp, a drooping wreck of worn-out femininity. Commandant Gheur had been kind enough to send on half a sheep and a case of burgundy, and for a few hours I slept the sleep of the just.

Not for long, however, as the trader insisted that we must continue our march early next morning. This I protested against, because I felt ill and wanted to stay where I was for the following day. As he would not agree to wait, I bethought me of my machila, and said I would like to use it, but he cycled away without saying a word, so I had to follow as best I could.

It was very hot, and I thought I should die before reaching camp that night. For hour after hour I kept pegging away under that broiling sun, until at last I was pretty well tired out, and, seeing a little stream ahead, crawled to the bank and sat down. Thomas made some tea with a touch of brandy in it, and I had a much-needed rest.

While lying here I was astonished to see my machila being carried towards me, and the more I looked the more certain did I become that some one was inside it. As the bearers came nearer I went forward to meet them, when whom should I find that they were carrying but the trader's black wife! This was a little too thick, I thought, considering he had a native machila for the lady; and I set out for camp in a frame of mind that is more easily imagined than described.

Incidentally, I may observe that the porters had

pitched camp in the wrong place, and I said so, but the trader insisted that it was the spot which had been agreed upon. Then we discussed the little matter of my machila and the black woman.

I asked him what he meant by doing such a thing, when he already had a native machila for her, to which he replied, "I don't see why you should object. You put a black man in it." An animated little conversation followed, and we parted on fighting terms, as the classical song-writer has it.

After a bit he came back again, and said that he thought the time had come for us to separate, a proposition to which I warmly agreed, adding that I would be glad if he would kindly divide the provisions and leave me some porters before taking his departure.

Again he retired, but only to return yet once again, later in the evening. This time in order to apologise! I accepted the apology, but refused to use my machila any more. And so, for the moment, the trouble ended.

We were up and off early next morning, and although I still felt far from well, I could not resist my tracker's invitation to have another try for the wily buck, and soon found myself creeping through the bush in that breathless fashion to which I was now growing accustomed. Then the boy pointed, and there was a herd of antelope in front of us, so we dropped on to hands and knees and crawled round to within fifty yards of them.

I did not feel capable of hitting a haystack that morning, but one can at least try, so I drew a bead on the nearest buck, and fired. Joy! one of them dropped, but whether it was the one I happened to

be aiming at, or another, I would not like to swear. But what of that? The boys were none the wiser, and we judge by results in the bush—and elsewhere.

This was my first daikar, and I had shot it with my Winchester. The animal was brought in on a pole to the place where we were going to breakfast. Later that same day the trader shot an eland and a daikar, and these two animals were cut up for the porters.

The cutting up and distribution of meat was quite a ceremony. The porters were all drawn up in one long line, with the trader in the middle and the capitos, or headmen, one at each end. The pieces of meat were also placed in a line, one piece opposite each man, and at a given word the men were allowed to pick up their respective portions. It was, of course, impossible always to cut all the pieces to an exactly similar size, and not infrequently one boy would try to seize his neighbour's meat, if the latter were larger than his own. But, whenever this happened, vengeance followed swiftly, the offender receiving a fierce cut with the trader's chicotte across his face, back, or head, which ever happened to come handiest. Whereupon he would retire, howling.

We had a very long march before us on the following day, and I made an excellent start by breaking my bicycle chain and puncturing a tyre. The trader passed me soon afterwards on his machine; but, with the courtesy to which I was now growing accustomed he did not stop even to inquire why I was not riding.

I spent a very cheerful day, walking up and down mountains and pounding my way along rocky paths,

Returning from the picnic at Lukafu.

Mrs. Roby giving out food to her porters.

until the whole world around me seemed to become one singing space, and I moved forward like one in some hideous nightmare. Somehow or other I managed to reach camp, and at once fainted dead away, like the heroines in the story-books. When I came to, I found the trader and Thomas pouring water over my face.

Later on the trader came to me about his black wife. He said, "The woman is ill. Will you go to her? I think she is dying."

I did not feel like one who has just returned from the seaside myself; but, finding I was able to move, I crawled away on all-fours, and managed to reach the woman's little grass tent, where I found that she was certainly very ill indeed. I gave her an injection of digitalis and strychnine, and afterwards some opium. Then I accomplished a painful progress back to my own tent again.

That night's rest did me a lot of good, and we rested here all the next day, while the trader sent a messenger on to Kateti, bidding the chief to have food ready for our porters on their arrival. Meanwhile, to improve the shining hour, I determined to have some target practice, so, taking a half-sheet of ordinary notepaper, I inked in a bull's-eye, at which I proceeded to have some pot-shots.

The trader stood behind my chair and criticised each shot as it was made with, "A little too high!" "A little too much to the right!" "A little too low!" or "Why not try to hit the bull's-eye?" And then, wonderful to relate, I actually did hit the bull's-eye, to my huge delight; for it occurred to me that if I could hit so small a mark as this I ought to be able to hit most things.

An uneventful night's sleep followed, and then, at 4.30 next morning, we set out for Kateti. It was fearfully stiff going, the first part of the march being a long climb over mountainous country, after traversing which we entered a great bamboo forest. The place was full of monkeys of all sizes, and the creatures kept shouting at us in trios, quartettes, and choruses, until the wood re-echoed with their cries. After a time the larger monkeys began shying branches and bits of stick at us, whereupon we raised our guns, and instantly there was complete silence and not a single one of them to be seen!

Five miles outside Kateti we came upon a Belgian doctor *en route* for Lukafu. He said he had just come out from Europe to investigate the sleeping sickness scourge, and to burn back the villages. This burning back is done to keep the villagers out of the sleeping sickness area, any villages that have been erected within the area being burned down, after which the natives re-erect others outside the forbidden area. Lest certain scribes should think otherwise, let me hasten to add that the natives themselves are *not* burned with their villages!

We reached Kateti about 3 p.m., and were very much surprised to find a large number of soldiers and porters, with some Belgian officers, encamped outside the village. One of the officers gave us the cheerful information that he had taken the food which the traders had ordered for our porters; but he added that Kateti had plenty more.

And here, perhaps, I ought to say that the names of villages in the Congo are taken from their chiefs. Thus, when Kateti ceased to be chief of this particular village, the place would cease to bear his

name, and would be called after the chief who succeeded him. For this reason a proper map of the Congo is practically impossible, at least as regards the villages.

Well, we left the soldiers and passed on two m beyond the village, where we presently encam Here the trader went out and succeeded in shooting a couple of hartebeeste, which were cut up and smoked over wood fires, so that for the next few days we should not require any more flour for our porters.

While we were at dinner Kateti arrived to say that he had no more food. The trader replied that unless three sacks of flour were delivered on the following morning the chief would be tied up and his son taken away by us as a hostage. Needless to say, the flour was duly forthcoming next day.

After dinner, while in my tent, I was surprised to hear a great singing and shouting outside. Thomas informed me that all the women had come in to see the white woman. This was quite unexpected, for I was in a dressing-grown and had my hair down at that moment. I hastily prepared to put up my locks, but Thomas said—

"No! Missisi leave hair down! All the women bringing tomatoes and fruit, and if Missisi leave hair down they want no payment. Leave hair down, much cheaper!" So I left hair down.

The natives here had never seen a white woman before, and as I stepped out from my tent I felt rather like some "new turn" on a music-hall stage. I went and sat in a chair; Thomas stood behind me; and the "audience" sat in front of me in a circle. Then the "performance" began, Thomas interpreting.

I began by asking why so few of them had brought babies with them.

They answered, "Babies make so much noise, and we hear the Bibi Bwana not very well, so would not like noise."

I thanked them for bringing me food, and asked whether they had brought any for the Bwana.

They told me, "No, the Bwana can buy. He always travel, but the Bibi Bwana is most wonderful to see."

Thomas asked them if they could bring me in a couple of chickens, and they said "Yes." Later on the birds were brought in, and the trader paid a franc for them.

Meanwhile, I may say that their gifts of fruit had been dropped on the ground and pushed towards my feet, as though the presents were quite worthless and beneath my notice altogether. This is a native custom which I have always admired, for however handsome a gift may be, it is always presented as though it were of no account whatever.

We resumed our march early next morning; but scarcely had I started when Thomas informed me that some of the porters had bolted during the night, so the trader had gone into the village that morning and had taken four natives and Kateti's son to carry loads. Thomas said that the old chief had begged, with tears in his eyes, that his son might not be taken, as the boy was quite young and had bad feet. But the trader disbelieved this, and had bidden him go to a region more sultry than even the Congo.

I was furiously indignant when I heard this, for I had distinctly understood that if Kateti brought in food his son was not to be taken. I mounted my

cycle in double-quick time, and rode forward with Thomas until I overtook the chief's son, who was walking with a heavy load under which he limped painfully. I told Thomas to tell him to put down his load and return to his father as quickly as possible. Then I rode on and told the trader what I had done.

You should have seen his face! To say that he was absolutely infuriated is far too mild a description of the gentleman's state of mind, and, if he had dared, he would have knocked me off my bicycle then and there. I saw it in his eye! All through that day's march his temper kept simmering nicely, and when we reached camp he let it go as far as possible. First of all, he had his own tent erected before mine was touched. Then, because the boy with the food came in behind the other porters, he picked up his chicotte and was going to thrash him, but once more I stepped in and stopped his little game. Finally, I went off to my own tent to have dinner alone, as it was unbearable to be near a man who went slashing about amongst his wretched porters for no reason, except to satisfy his own ill-humour.

I now got Thomas to fill all the water-bags, bottles, &c., from a running stream near by, as we had been warned by Commandant Gheur not to touch the water between this place and Kilwa, which was a two days' march distant.

After dinner a villager came in with a wild cat which he had just caught. I took a great fancy to the snarling, spitting little bunch of fur, and wanted to buy it from him, but the man refused. My bicycle boy was close by at the time, and heard what was

said. He did not say anything, and I thought no more of the matter, never guessing that the boy had paid much attention to what had happened.

I was awakened early next morning by Thomas, who said that the Bwana had sent on all the porters and the kitchen, and that my tea had been waiting some time. This was sufficiently obvious when I tasted it, so, hastily dressing, I went outside, where I found the trader awaiting me.

He said it was a long march, and suggested that we should go ahead of the porters and look for game. I do not care to go far ahead of my porters as a rule, but as he was so pressing I followed him. We rode for two or three hours under a burning sun, until at last I suggested that we should wait for the porters to come up. He laughed, and said, "It will be hours before they come, as some deserted last night, and I have had to double up the loads. Come on, let's get to camp."

I asked where my bicycle boy was, and he said that the fellow had gone off after the wild cat which I had taken such a fancy to. "And," he added, "I'll bet you ten pounds to a penny that he will steal it for you; and if he does I guess I'll give him a good dose of chicotte."

As the boy belonged to me, I told my lord that he had another guess coming about the chicotte business, and that if any chicotting had to be done, I guessed I was strong enough to do it myself.

After this exchange of compliments we rode on and on until I was nearly overcome by the heat. Then we suddenly rode into a great cloud of tsetse-fly, which fell upon me and bit through gloves and putties, and soon were in under my veil, biting my

face as well. It was a horrible situation, with the glaring sun, the dazzling white road, and the infernal buzz, buzz, buzz and biting of these pestilential insects. I appealed to the trader to come and help me kill the flies that were inside my veil, and he leisurely dismounted and came and did so. While he crushed the insects he said, "Well, if these are the sleeping sickness flies, you're done for!"

With this cheering remark, he remounted and rode on, while I sat down on the ground with my back against a tree, feeling that if I had to die I might just as well do so in comparative comfort. I took out my cigarettes and started to smoke, which kept the flies off; but I felt very ill and was determined not to move until some of the porters arrived.

I had sat thus for about half an hour when two of the porters came up, one of them being my bicycle boy, who, I noticed, was carrying something. It was the wild cat!

I asked him to explain, and he said, "Whatever the Bibi wants she must have. What does black man mean by not bringing in what Bibi wants?"

"But," I said, "what about the trouble the man had in catching the cat?"

"No trouble," he answered. "Man goes into bush, throws down piece of meat, cat goes to meat, man throws cloth over cat's head. No trouble!"

"But did you not give the man anything?" I asked.

"Yes," he replied promptly, "I gave him a beating."

"Ah," said I, "and do you know that the Bwana means to give you a beating?"

"Bibi will not allow him," he replied. "He will not do what Bibi does not want. The Bibi is kind in sickness, but every one is afraid when she is fierce, and so the Bwana will not beat me."

I left it at that, and asked the other man about the arrival of the water, but he replied that it was many hours behind, that the porters were very tired and very thirsty, and that it would be many hours before they reached camp. I therefore mounted my machine once more and rode on, with a porter on either side of me.

As we neared the village one of them touched my arm and pointed into the bush, and, looking up, I saw a great bird standing there all by itself. I dismounted, took my Enfield, which was fastened on my cycle, and brought it down, when I discovered that I had nailed a marabout. He was an old bird, and part of his beak had been shot away, while his feathers, except the tail, were of no use. The boys cut out the tail for me.

Then I rode into the clearing, where I found the trader sitting before the rest-house. I dismounted, and got the boys to gather leaves so that I could lie down, for my head was buzzing. In a few minutes they had a bed of leaves ready, on which I soon fell asleep.

I was roused by the voice of the trader saying "Drink! Drink!" and found that he was holding a cup of filthy water to my lips. I remembered Commandant Gheur's warning, and asked if the porters had come in with our water yet. He said, "No." I answered, "Then you drink first." But he shook his head, saying, "No, I can wait." I knocked the cup out of his hands, and said, "So can I!"

After this little diversion I returned to my bed of leaves, and lay there, with an unquenchable thirst, waiting wearily for the porters who seemed never to be coming. Soon I fell asleep, and about an hour afterwards was awakened by the voice of Thomas saying, "Cup of tea ready for Missisi, and tent put up. Missisi look very ill."

Missisi felt all she looked, and consumed cup after cup of tea without being able wholly to quench her fiery thirst. Presently the trader turned up, and honoured me by helping himself to some of my tea.

Soon afterwards I went to bed, and taking my temperature found it to be 105·3. Then I slept for some hours. When I woke up it must have been late at night, but the trader was by my bedside, asking if he could do anything, as Thomas had told him that I was ill. I answered, "Nothing!" I slept again till morning, when I heard the trader's voice again, this time outside my tent, but I could not muster up enough strength to answer.

Once more I had a spell of sleep, but at last the heat of the tent became unbearable, so I whistled, and Thomas came running in. I said, "Missisi very ill; make some soup."

But Thomas answered, "I cannot. The Bwana has gone with all food except sardines, and all porters except four or five."

I was astounded. "Gone where?" I demanded.

Thomas shook his head. "Just gone!" he answered.

This gave me something to think about, with a vengeance; for of all the horrible contingencies of bush life the worst is to find oneself deserted! While

I slowly recovered from the first shock Thomas brought me a cup of tea. Then, half-delirious as I was, I dressed, put the wild cat in my pocket, and got on to my bicycle, bidding the porters follow me with the tent.

It was a ghastly experience, that ride! The day was frightfully hot, and I rode on and on through the sweltering heat, wondering every moment how much further I could possibly go without collapsing. For between two and three hours I stuck to this grim chase, and then at last my strength finally gave out, I fell off my bicycle, and lay where I fell on the road in raging delirium.

For three hours I lay thus, while my bicycle runner, getting nervous, ran off to the nearest village, from whence he ultimately returned with a machila. Still unconscious, I was placed inside, and carried thus into Kilwa, where the trader had already arrived.

I just remember the Chef de Poste telling the boys to carry me into the guest-house, and my recollections after that are hazy.

For two days I lay here, attended only by Thomas, and on the third morning the Chef de Poste sent to ask me if I would go on to Lukonzolwa, where he thought I should recover sooner, as it was higher up on the Lake Mwero. A boat, it appeared, was going up to Pweto to meet the Commandant of the forces, and it could be stopped *en route* at this Poste for me to disembark. I therefore agreed to this arrangement.

When the boat arrived they fitted up a grass tent on board, and my bed was made up underneath, so that I could sleep there. Then I got aboard, and the first person whom I clapped eyes on was my

MRS. ROBY, AND TWO OF HER PORTERS, WITH TAMED WILD CAT, AND MARABOU SHOT BY HER.

BOAT IN WHICH MRS. ROBY TRAVELLED UP LAKE MWERO.

chivalrous friend, the trader! I could not speak to him, though, I felt too ill just then, and I scarcely saw anything of him afterwards. Each night he slept on shore, and during the voyage not a single word was exchanged between us.

Upon the evening of the second day I was sitting in an easy chair on the edge of the boat when Thomas said, "Shoot, Missisi! Plenty hippo!"

It was quite true. The hippo kept coming up to breathe all round us. They would rise to the surface of the water, give a great snort, and then disappear again.

I took up my rifle and began to shoot, but for some time I made nothing but misses. Then at last I hit one, and there was a great swirling of water about thirty yards from the boat. I thought the great beast was coming down to the boat, but Thomas said, "No. He dead. Come up to-morrow morning."

In addition to the hippo there were numerous crocodiles floating on the water, and I next turned my attention to them. After a time I managed to shoot one, winding up a successful little evening shoot in this fashion.

Next morning we reached Lukonzolwa, where I was met by the Chef de Poste, who said the guest-house was ready for me, so I took his arm and we went up the hill together. I went to lunch at the mess, and was surprised (agreeably, of course!) to see the trader at table. During the meal a porter came running in to say that a dead hippo (the one I had shot the night before) had been sighted a mile down the river, so the trader went off to get the meat for his men, as it was no use to me.

Strange to say, the trader and I did not speak to

one another at lunch, and this fact the Chef de Poste was not slow to observe. When he conducted me to the guest-house after the meal he asked me why I did not speak, as he had understood that I was travelling in company with a white man.

I said I had thought so, too, at the beginning of the journey, but that now I was beginning to think I must be colour-blind! Then I told him just what my charming friend had done a few days before.

He therefore sought out the trader and spoke to him on the subject, but got no change from that quarter, being told that it was no affair of his. I then sent a message to say that I would like to see the man, although I still felt weak and ill. He came, and we engaged in another of our pleasant little conversations!

I asked why he had left me. He replied, "I am not cut out for a Cook's tourist man."

I asked whether he would leave me food and porters. He said, "No!"

I asked what I could do. He replied, "Do as you please!"

"How can I get food?" I inquired.

"That is your lookout," he returned.

So our *tête-à-tête* ended, and that evening he departed, leaving me without a single porter and without a particle of food, although he knew perfectly well that food could not be found anywhere.

This was a pleasant predicament! I asked the advice of the Chef de Poste, who told me that he had already sent a message on to the English missionary, Mr. Crawford, at the next Poste Luanza, asking him to stop the trader and insist upon a division of the provisions.

CHAPTER IV

I PART FROM THE TRADER; REACH PWETO; AND MEET WITH SOME BUSH EXPERIENCES

MR. and Mrs. Crawford met me at Luanza, and to them I unfolded my tale of woe. The result was that for three days Mr. Crawford and the trader argued and argued, until at last the latter agreed to give me enough food to last until I reached German East Africa. He began by saying that I must have half of everything he had, or nothing at all; but I refused that offer, suspecting that a great deal of the stuff he had would be useless to me.

This indeed proved to be the case, as I discovered when I came to go through his supplies. They comprised plenty of tea, coffee, and cocoa, a certain amount of tinned fish, one tin of beef, one tin of tongue, but very little flour, rice, and sugar. On the other hand, there were dozens of tins of cycle oil, bootlaces, candles, scents galore, and enough soap to last a large household for years!

Now he had bargained with me to bring a big supply of rice, flour, potatoes, onions, and sugar, whereas these were just the articles of which he had least, the fact being, of course, that he had

come out determined to trust chiefly to his rifle for food.

Having chosen the supplies that I required, Mr. Crawford arranged the business details with the trader, to whom I then handed over a cheque, thus settling my account with the most curious specimen of "gentility" which I had ever had the misfortune to encounter.

I stayed with the Crawfords for three or four days, and experienced nothing but kindness at their hands, and many and interesting were the anecdotes which the good missionary told me about his experiences in Central Africa.

Many years before, while passing through Emperor Mushida's country, Mr. Crawford was taken prisoner by the Emperor, who said—

"I am the burr that sticks to the passer-by, and therefore you are my prisoner. I am the mimosa whose trunk is studded with thorns. Climb me if you can!" This was his picturesque way of describing himself and his soldiers, and the difficulty which any prisoner would experience in trying to escape.

Mushida was married to a white woman, and Mr. Crawford became the great man's secretary. Later, when Sir Alfred Sharpe entered the Congo, before the Belgian occupation, he far too bluntly proposed to annex the territory for Great Britain, but was repelled by the Emperor, barely escaping with his life.

Thinking it likely that Mushida might change his mind, Sir Alfred left the treaty with Mr. Crawford, who, about a year later, actually got it signed by the chief. The document was then sent by six official

couriers, directed to the first white man whom they might meet going east. And now comes one of life's little ironies, for it was an Englishman, Captain Stairs, who, in the pay of the Belgians, intercepted the couriers and destroyed the treaty. Thus we lost the Congo. Captain Stairs died soon afterwards, many say of a broken heart.

Mr. Crawford told me that when Stanley arrived in the Congo to relieve Emin Pasha, he found the said gentleman anything but relieved at the sight of his would-be reliever, as he was snugly ensconced in the bush with his beautiful wife, intent only on catching his beloved butterflies. A song sung in this part of the Congo even to-day about Stanley is worth mentioning, the words being—

"Mutoto weto Mutoto weto Chukyo Viema,"

which means—

"Carry well, carry well our little baby, our little baby!"

This, applied to Stanley, is really laughable, as the name given to him (in common with all other white men) by the natives was "Va-m-bula matadi," or The Man of Stone.

As I have said, this name is given to all white men, although a certain writer, more remarkable for his emotional qualities than for his historical accuracy, has solemnly declared that "Man of Stone" is only applied by the natives to a Belgian. Who said "Atrocities"?

Mr. Crawford got me about twenty-five porters, advising me, as I was still weak, to be carried to Pweto in a machila. He also obtained a capito for me, the saddest-looking man whom I have ever

seen. I asked why he never smiled, and the missionary told me this story about him.

The man had been a great hippo hunter, and was accustomed to cut off the best parts of the hippo and bring them in to his chief. While he was away hunting one time his mother lay dying in the village where he lived, near Luanza. The other natives, hearing of the poor woman's condition, lit a fire and put on pots to boil, round which they sat, waiting for the end. At last one of them grew impatient, and, with the quintessence of cruelty, proceeded calmly to cut thin strips of flesh from the dying woman and throw them into the pot. And so the last glimpse of the world she had was the consumption of her own flesh by her cannibal neighbours!

When the hunter, my capito, returned, he found that his mother had been eaten, and, going to the chief, he said, "I will never hunt for you again! While I was getting steaks of hippo for you, you were eating the steaks of my mother!" Mr. Crawford managed to find a few of the bones, and gave them burial, but, as he said, "The lady was licked up, bones and gravy!"

After this gruesome tale I no longer wondered at the gravity of my unfortunate capito.

I now prepared to make a start for Pweto, and on looking over the boxes of wine which I had bought at Sakania, found that the trader had helped himself to the greater part of my brandy and to seven out of twelve bottles of champagne, and nine bottles of burgundy out of twelve sent me by Commandant Gheur. Mr. Crawford advised me not to have anything more to do with the fellow, however, and I thoroughly fell in with his advice.

Well, then, I set out for Pweto, with twenty-five porters, my stores, and in a machila which was carried by eight of the boys. Pweto is about a two hours' march from Luanza, but I did not go straight there, but stopped for breakfast at a village called Nyembwa Kanda. As I alighted from the machila I was greeted with a terrific African warcry, while the whole village rushed out to see me, the first white woman, except Mrs. Crawford, who had ever visited them.

I was quickly surrounded by dozens and dozens of women, many of whom carried babies, some of which were a few hours and others a few months old. They all showed a most lively interest in me, and it was some time before I managed to sit down to breakfast. During the meal in came the chief, and I asked, through Thomas, where he had been. He replied that they had sent for him from Pweto, and he had just got back. The Government wanted porters, and had ordered him to supply some, but all his able men were away at work, so this was impossible. "I can grow potatoes," he added, with a smile, "but I cannot grow porters!"

He then asked Thomas whether I would like to hear what he had once done, in order to escape the bother of having to supply porters; and of course I replied, "Yes." Whereupon he told me the following story.

Some years before he had been told to send in porters, and as he was tired of doing so, he called his headmen together and suggested a trick by which they might escape from the porter nuisance for many months to come. The idea was that he should "die," and as the headmen readily fell in with the

proposal, he lay down there and then, and they arranged him in a becoming attitude of apparent death. Then they sent off a courier to Pweto, to convey the sad news of their chief's death to the officials at that post. This, they calculated, would prevent the officials from sending to their village for porters for some time.

As luck would have it, some native soldiers happened to enter the village almost immediately after the "death" of the chief, and these men, hearing the death-song, asked what was the matter.

"Our chief is dead," the villagers told them.

"When did he die?" asked the soldiers.

"This morning," they were told.

This was good news for the soldiers, who were feeling hungry, and they quickly made up their minds to have a good meal off the defunct chief! With this object in view, they proceeded to his hut, but before they could put their benevolent intentions into practice the chief came to life again, with a promptitude which was very disappointing to his visitors! A messenger was sent after the courier, to stop the news being taken to Pweto, and since that time the chief has been content to put up with the troubles of this life without seeking those of another existence.

After breakfast I continued my march to Pweto, leaving Lake Mwero, and crossing the Lua Laba River in a small boat near the spot where the river leaves the lake, with a roar, through Livingstone's "huge rent in the mountains." So I reached Pweto without further incident, and here the Chef de Poste gave me the use of the guest-house, and introduced me to the mess.

At dinner that night I noticed that nearly all the men swallowed their knives while eating, and I became so deeply interested watching to see which of them would cut his mouth first that I discovered the end of dinner had arrived without my having eaten anything! So I had to have sardines and tea in my own room later.

There was a little Sicilian doctor here who caused me great amusement. I heard that he had a baby leopard, so at dinner I said, smiling across the table, "Oh, Doctor, please give me the leopard, as I should so like it as a memento of Pweto!" But I had chosen an unfortunate memento for my appeal, as he happened to have got his knife right down his throat at the time I spoke. When the blade came to sight again he replied wrathfully, "No, madame, the le-o-pard is mine, and I keep him." I thanked him for his courtesy and determined to try him again next day, by which time there was reasonable hope that he would have digested his dinner—also his knife, if his swallowing efforts should be crowned with success.

After dinner one of the officials apologised to me for his colleague's rudeness, but explained that the doctor was suffering great pain, as he had hit a porter on the head that afternoon and had cut his hand badly in doing so; to which I answered, "Hurrah!"

Next morning I saw this charming ornament to the medical profession examining the natives for sleeping sickness, when, to vary the monotony of examining their glands, he would hit out sideways every now and then, to keep the crowd back. The boys, however, were evidently accustomed to these

delicate attentions from their medical attendant, for they almost invariably avoided the blows of their funny little friend.

Suddenly there was a great commotion, and then a native came running in to say that Commandant Olsen was coming into Pweto with some troops. The Commandant, a Danish gentleman, chief of the forces in the Congo, was marching from the Boma to mobilise 20,000 black soldiers at Elizabethville. He entered Pweto from the north-east, and, hearing that there was a white woman in the place, he immediately called upon me.

In course of conversation he discovered that I was going on alone over the route which he had just traversed. This, he said, was very dangerous country, infested by lions and leopards, and he strongly advised me to return with him to Elizabethville. When I refused, he insisted that I ought to have a small escort of soldiers, and, although I argued with him for an hour, I was obliged, in the end, to accept his courteous offer of four soldiers and a Sous officer (sergeant), the latter being a not very high-class Belgian.

Early on Monday morning I sent my porters off, telling the capito where the camp was to be pitched that night, while I stayed at Pweto for lunch. During the morning I took a walk round the post with Commandant Olsen, and in the course of our wanderings we reached the house of my friend, the Sicilian doctor. I suggested that we should have the baby leopard brought out and photographed, and this we did, after which we concocted a little story to relate to the doctor at lunch.

We then returned to the mess, and when every one was seated, I leant forward, and said as sweetly as I could, "Thank you *so* much, Doctor, for having given me your leopard. Commandant Olsen told me how you had generously consented to allow me to take it as a souvenir of Pweto, and I have had it put in a box and sent on by one of my porters. Thank you a thousand times!"

On hearing this innocent speech the doctor grew livid in the face, and, trembling with suppressed passion, he shouted—

"Madame, if you have taken my le-o-pard, you are a thief, and I will have you imprisoned! I will send for the magistrate and have you taken to prison!" The intensity of his feelings here got the better of him, and, speechless with indignation, he glared at me over the table like some newly captured animal at the Zoo.

"Oh, but you must have me imprisoned too," said Commandant Olsen, "for I told Madame you had given the animal to her."

The doctor, however, was not to be diverted from me, and, entirely ignoring the Commandant, he continued to snarl at me, when next he could find words, "If you have stolen my le-o-pard, madame, you are a thief!"

By this time the whole table had tumbled to the joke that we were having with the little man, and as he repeated his furious accusation for the second time a great roar of laughter went up from every one who was present, and the indignant doctor slowly began to realise that he was being made a fool of, and that his beloved little "le-o-pard" had *not* been stolen at all!

He therefore became full of apologies, but I took no further notice of him. He made me feel tired.

During this luncheon party I noticed that Commandant Olsen's A.D.C. stared at me continuously all through the meal, and after a time this rather got on my nerves, so I turned to him and said, "I am afraid you do not like my face. I must apologise!" He replied, "Forgive me, madame, for staring so rudely, but it is because you are the first white woman whom I have seen for three years and three months. I hope I have not been very rude."

Of course I excused him, and bade him gaze at me as much as he liked, and I must do him the justice to say that he took me at my word, and gazed!

Indeed, whether on account of my fatal beauty or merely because of the lack of white women in Central Africa I know not, but the fact remains that I could have become a Mormon without the slightest difficulty during this expedition of mine. Yes, in all modesty I can confess that I was responsible for a regular District Messenger service of porters, whose sole duty it was to pursue me through the bush, bearing epistles of an amatory nature from officials residing at posts through which I had passed in the course of my journey.

But, what would you? How can one choose when all are equally charming? And I admired each one of my hosts so much that I could not feel justified in favouring one more than the others. I therefore made it a rule to bid every one of them a sad and tearful farewell, continuing on my way in single blessedness!

"Sammy, beware of widders!"

After lunch I set out, with my soldiers and sergeant, but had only proceeded about eleven miles when, to my astonishment, I came upon my porters, snugly encamped, with the tents up and everything ready for the night. Of course, it was not the place where I had told them to camp, and, moreover, on examination, the water turned out to be very bad; so down came the tents, and we prepared to continue our march. Before starting, however, the sergeant and my capito had a great argument as to which was the best road, the capito saying that we should go to the left and the sergeant declaring that we must go to the right.

In the end the sergeant marched off to the right, taking his soldiers with him, so I felt the only thing was to follow, although my capito kept coming up behind me and saying "'Mengi! Mengi!" Of course the capito was right and the obstinate fool of a sergeant wrong. We were supposed to reach camp by 6 p.m. that night, but, as a matter of fact, we did nothing of the kind.

When we had been going about an hour great clouds appeared on the horizon, and then suddenly there came a terrific flash of lightning, followed by a great crash of thunder which made me fall clean off my bicycle, wondering what on earth had befallen me. It had all happened so unexpectedly that I was dazed for several seconds. Then I scrambled up on to my machine again, and rode on after the sergeant, who, I was thankful to think, had not seen my mishap.

When I came up with him he said, "Oh, madame, I do not like the lightning! We will

dismount, leave the machines beneath a tree, and sit under the shelter the soldiers have made until the rain passes." We got under cover just in time, and then down it came, "raining nigger babies" as they say in America.

After a time the storm abated a little, and as it was now after five o'clock, I suggested that we should continue our journey. While the sergeant was still thinking about it, I mounted my bike and rode off as quickly as the sandy path permitted. On and on I rode, but still no village could I see, and all the while the wretched rain kept coming down, so that I was very soon soaked to the skin.

After going forward for half an hour I saw some objects moving ahead of me, and, as I drew nearer, noticed that they were a number of natives coming along the path towards me. They were tall men, clothed in sheep-skins, and carrying in their hands long double-bladed spears, one thrust from which would go clean through a man.

Now only a few yards lay between us, but still they did not show any signs of moving from the path. On the contrary, they drew together, so that I could not pass and had to dismount.

There were eight of them, and I did not like their looks; but I had little time to think of that, for now the leader faced me, and, with a wave of the hand, demanded "matebisha" (a present).

You never know beforehand how you are going to feel when you come up against it like this; but on the present occasion, directly the man spoke, I was filled with a feeling of anger, and made up my mind on the spot to give him nothing, whatever happened to me afterwards.

When I refused, he scowled, and his companions pressed round him, balancing their spears at me. This, I remember thinking, would at any rate be a pretty quick sort of death, and perhaps better than fever. It seems funny that one should not be afraid of death when it comes right up to one, but the truth is, I suppose, that there are other things to think of just then.

Well, for a few moments we stood like this; the natives demanding a present while I shook my head. And all the time my mind was working hard with the question that troubled me most. It was this: How many of them could I account for before they accounted for me?

Of course, I had a revolver in the hip pocket of my riding breeches, but my "gun" only carried six bullets, and there were eight men to put out of action before I could get off. Indeed, the chances were that I should only have time to loose off a couple of shots before they overpowered me.

Again I heard the voice of their leader repeating his demand, and I knew that it was a case of now or never.

I shifted a bit behind my bicycle, and nodded as though about to comply with his wishes. At the same time I slowly thrust my right hand back to my hip pocket.

Death seemed very close to me at that moment, and little incidents from my past life, away over in far-distant England, floated before my mind's eye, like pictures on a cinematograph film. From the time I nodded to the time when my fingers closed on the revolver handle could only have been a few seconds, but those seconds might have been

hours, so many thoughts went hurrying through my brain in that little interval.

Then, dropping low behind the machine, I whipped out my revolver in the same movement and covered the leading man, determined that he at least should never hold up another traveller.

What was it that stopped me from firing? I had meant to shoot; but a sudden change came over the cruel face, even while my muscles were contracting to press the trigger, and still I knelt there, covering him.

The fierceness died out of his eyes. His determined air disappeared, and I knew, as surely as I was there, that the man was beaten without a shot having been fired.

He shrank back on his companions, and then, like a pack of whipped dogs, they slunk away into the bush, and were lost to sight.

Suddenly it became night, and there I was, without a light, left to grope my way along the path as best I could. Riding was now impossible, so I dismounted and began to push the machine forward through the string of puddles that soon became quite deep under the heavy rain. It would have been well-nigh impossible to make much progress along that path, but for the flashes of lightning which showed me the path ahead and so saved me from wandering off into the bush.

While I pushed on slowly, miserable and dripping, I presently became conscious of a peculiar sound that came from the dense bush on my left hand. Involuntarily I stood still and listened. My heart began to beat rapidly, my hair stood up, and the sweat of sheer funk trickled slowly down my face.

I was listening to the purring snarl of a leopard over some prey it had caught, and the animal was, I knew, only a few yards from the spot where I was standing. Try as I would, I could not drag myself from the place! Fear had hypnotised me, and I just stood and stood, absolutely incapacitated, waiting for I knew not what.

How long I stood like this I do not know, but the next thing I remember was the arrival of a couple of porters, who heard the snarling, and, exclaiming, "Plenty lion and leopard!" hurried on past me as hard as they could go. And still I stood there speechless. The next arrival was the sergeant, who came forward to take my bike. As he took it he heard the snarls, and exclaiming "Mon Dieu!" bolted with both bikes! That broke the spell somehow, and next moment I found myself dashing after him like a champion sprinter!

I overtook him some way further on and found him in a great state of mind because we had no lights. "Haven't you a light? Not even a candle? My God! why have you not a candle?" he kept asking me, and the idea of lighting a candle in the middle of such a tropical rainstorm tickled me to such an extent that I could not help laughing at his ridiculous question.

As a matter of fact, I had an electric torch, which I had packed in the middle of a basket of onions to keep it dry, and I told him so. We therefore decided to await the arrival of onions and torch before resuming our troublous progress.

Needless to say, the man with the onions was the very last porter to arrive, and then, when I had unpacked and lighted the torch, our porters, with

howls of dismay, dashed off into the bush, declaring that it was witchcraft. However, they presently decided to come back to the path again and brave the terrors of my witchery; and so, lit by the light of my torch, we resumed our pleasant little pilgrimage.

The porters went on ahead and we followed, the sergeant pushing the bicycles. As we plodded along I could not help wondering what would happen if a lion or a leopard suddenly made its appearance, the guns being with the porters. It struck me pretty forcibly that the bicycles would follow the guns and that I should be left lamenting! However, the Fates were with us this time and no wild beast made its appearance.

At about 10.30 p.m. we came to a village, the people, of course, all being in bed. While Thomas made me a cup of tea the sergeant gave orders for his tent to be erected, and when I suggested that mine should be put up first he replied that it was only a matter of a few minutes and then mine would be erected as well. Then, while I turned to order my tent to be put up at once, bless me, if the sergeant did not sneak round and drink my tea!

I had some more tea made and managed to drink it myself this time, had my tent put up, took ten grains of quinine, and went to bed, but sleep would not come. We were encamped just inside the high stockade by which this village was surrounded, and at about three o'clock in the morning I was disturbed by a dreadful smell, followed by the unmistakable roar of a lion.

For the second time in a few hours my hair stood on end, and, getting out of bed, I turned on my

electric torch and pushed it through a small opening high up in the tent. When I looked out and saw the stockade I remembered just where I was and returned to bed in a more peaceful frame of mind. In about twenty minutes I was asleep, and did not wake up again until six o'clock next morning, when I at once dressed and found a cup of hot coffee and some toast awaiting me.

I found that the sergeant had sent all the carriers on except the few needed to carry my tent, which annoyed me a good deal, as I wanted some breakfast, and said so. The gentleman had taken care to have some eggs himself before the departure of the kitchen, but when I mentioned breakfast he turned to me quite calmly and assured me that the less one ate when on the march the better it was for one. I liked that!

Fortunately, the chief of the village came up soon afterwards with a large branch of bananas, so I did have something to eat.

In reply to my questions the chief told me that the big stockade round his village had been necessary because so many lions and leopards had climbed over the smaller ones, carrying away many of his people, and that therefore now they had built one that Zimba could not climb. Then I wished him "Bon zoor" and set out, wondering whether any other white woman had ever been through the experiences which I was now meeting with from hour to hour.

It was seven o'clock when I left the village, but once more the luck was against me, for I had not gone very far when I discovered a puncture in my tyre, and although I pumped it up and started off again, down came the tyre once more, and I knew

that I should have the pleasure of a hot day's march on foot.

It was to be a six and a half hours' march that day, and I kept on pushing that accursed bicycle until about nine o'clock, when I sat down under a tree, feeling rather tired. Perhaps I looked rather bad; at any rate, some natives presently came by and, seeing me there, offered me some water which they were carrying. I asked if it was "musuri" (good), and they replied, "Musuri chabwino" (very good), so I had some and found that they had spoken the truth. They stared hard at me for a time and then one of them pointed to my bicycle and offered to push it for me, to which I agreed.

I set out again, and they all came with me, one of them pushing the bicycle and all of them chatting amongst themselves. When I grew tired I sat down, and they sat down round me and waited. I must have dozed off, for I presently looked up to find myself surrounded by a regular crowd of blacks. One of the men must have run to a neighbouring village while I slept and summoned the people to come and look at me. They had come, bringing with them some fresh milk and fruit for me, and after having some of this I felt better, but they would not let me pay.

I resumed my march alone, sending back my volunteer porters, who also refused payment.

I met many natives in this part of the Congo, men who had been acting as porters and were returning to their own villages, and they all looked healthy and happy and showed no signs of ill-treatment. I had my camera with me continually, on the chance of being able to snap some "mutilations,"

but the chance never presented itself, although I kept a vigilant eye open. The astonishment of all these men at meeting me alone in the bush was very amusing, for, as I have already remarked, I often rode alone, my porters and escort stretching out in a long line before or behind me, as the case might be.

Well, on and on I went, until at about mid-day I arrived at a running stream, and being by this time again very thirsty, I made a cup of my two hands and drank sparingly. Next I gathered some leaves, with which I made a pillow in a shady spot, and here I lay down and had a delightful rest until Thomas hove in sight, bearing my beloved tea-basket. He made me a cup of tea, to which I added a tot of brandy—there was no milk—and after drinking it felt better.

Thomas told me that my "rear-guard's bicycle" had also become broken, and he thought the Bwana was having breakfast made—*another* breakfast! However, as I was finishing my tea the military hero himself appeared, and a funny enough sight he looked, too!

He had evidently changed *en route*, and was now wearing a pair of canary-coloured corduroy breeches. He was walking in his stockings, while one of the soldiers carried his bike and another his boots. At sight of him I could not help shouting with laughter—he looked so quaint.

He told me that the nails in his boots had hurt his feet, therefore he had taken them off—"*et voilà!*"

I asked him how much further we had to go, and he replied that we ought to arrive in camp at about 2 p.m., but once more my capito disagreed with him and declared that the march was "Mengi, mengi,

mengi!" The sergeant pooh-poohed this, but I cannot say that I felt any great confidence in his judgment, remembering our march of the previous day.

However, there was nothing for it but to push forward, and before we had gone far the sergeant asked permission to go on ahead, so that he might have everything ready for me when I arrived in camp. To this I consented, and away he went, leaving me to drag my weary legs forward as best I could, my gun-bearers walking beside me. A somewhat ironical position in truth, for I felt much more like dropping in my tracks than dropping anything with a rifle that day!

CHAPTER V

MORE BUSH ADVENTURES—MY FIRST ELEPHANT—LUKONGOLWE AND LUSAKA

ON and on through the burning heat we continued this apparently endless march, and each time I asked how far away the village was the same reply, "Mengi! Mengi!" was forthcoming, until I cursed my sergeant and all his works.

At last my feet refused to move another step and I sat down abruptly and finally, explaining as best I could to my capito that here I meant to remain and that he must go ahead and have my tent brought back to me, as I simply could not move.

At this point I became a veritable woman, and putting my face between my hands, sobbed for very exhaustion. It was five o'clock then, and I had been on my feet for the best part of ten hours, having during that time had no refreshment except a drink of milk, some tea, and some bananas. I determined that in future my kitchen should travel just ahead of me, as I had no wish to emulate the feats of the professional starving men whom one sometimes sees locked up in a tank in London.

Just as I had formed this resolution my reverie was disturbed by the voice of my capito exclaiming,

"Machila! Machila!" This made me open my eyes and dry my tears, and there in the far distance I beheld a native machila, evidently empty, being borne in my direction.

In due course it arrived, and I then discovered to my joyful surprise that the sergeant had sent it back from the camping-place for me. He had evidently arrived there pretty footsore himself, and had therefore concluded that I should be even more exhausted. I climbed in at once, and was soon being carried campward in comparative comfort.

When we got in I found my tent up and Thomas preparing a chicken with rice, onions, and potatoes for my dinner. I invited the sergeant to join me, and he replied, "Oh, madame, I am very hungry, and shall eat one whole chicken myself, so permit my boy to put a chicken with yours, and then we will eat together." To this I agreed, and then we both called for quinine.

Some minutes after he had taken his I was much alarmed by hearing him call out, "Mon Dieu! Je transpire beaucoup! J'ai le fièvre!" And with this tragic exclamation he wrapped himself up in blankets and threw himself down on the bed in the rest-house, where he had decided to sleep that night.

I could not help being somewhat amused, as he had been telling me *en route* what a strong man he was, and how he could walk all his soldiers off their legs. When dinner was served I took him some soup, for he said he was too tired and too ill to eat his chicken. After absorbing the soup he wiped his face and head with his dinner-napkin, as though it had been a bath towel, and lay where he was, in great distress, while I made an excellent dinner.

As I was finishing my meal the chief of the village arrived, and after a short palaver informed Monsieur that there were many leopards about, and that the rest-house ought therefore to be closed up securely at night. This news seemed to banish all thought of illness from the gallant soldier's mind, and in an instant he was on his feet, calling to his soldiers and throwing the whole camp into a state of confusion.

Elaborate preparations to guard against this new danger were at once begun. The soldiers were told that they must sleep in the rest-house with their master, and canvas was fixed in front of all the windows. The fever-stricken one seemed to be even more upset by the possibility of being eaten alive than by the sickness from which he was suffering, so I offered him my tent. This, however, he refused, saying that he would be all right, surrounded by his soldiers.

When he had grown somewhat calmer I bade him good-night, and retired, and a few minutes afterwards was fast asleep.

How long I slept I know not, but presently I was awakened by the most awful yells, and, thinking the whole camp was being murdered, I turned on my electric torch and peeped through the tent. The first thing I saw was a great leopard prowling round the rest-house, evidently bent upon the destruction of my unfortunate sergeant. He was, however, making a gallant fight for his life, I must say, for he and his soldiers were making enough noise between them to wake the dead; but the leopard, being evidently of an unimpressionable disposition, continued to nose about outside the house in a hungrily suggestive manner.

I picked up my Enfield and had another look at the position. The animal presented a very fair shot, but then, if I happened to miss him, which was most probable, my bullet would probably enter the rest-house and bag a black soldier—or even the sergeant himself!

I put up the rifle, and, declaring to myself that I would not really fire, took aim at the leopard. It looked an easy shot—surely I could not miss! And then, before I realised what had happened, crack! the rifle had gone off, and, yes, there lay the leopard, struggling on the ground!

Meanwhile the screams from the rest-house continued to make night hideous, and then a flaming torch was thrust outside by one of the soldiers, in order to scare away the now defunct animal. After this the noise gradually died down, and I was permitted to resume my slumbers again until morning. We remained at the village next day, for I needed a rest, and Monsieur mended the bicycles—a little job that occupied him from early morn till dewy eve. The perils and excitement of the night seemed to have driven off his fever, and he found himself strong enough to dine with me that evening. I prepared a delightful cup of champagne, red wine, lemons, and soda-water; and Monsieur remarked that he would like to travel with me for a year, as I knew and understood "la vie d'Afrique." This, translated, meant that he liked my wine and cooking, and appreciated the fact that I did not object to his shirt sleeves and pipe. That I did not need any waiting upon may also have helped him in his opinion.

Shortly after dinner I bade him good-night,

expressing a sincere wish that his sleep would not be disturbed by prowling leopards or other blood-thirsty beasts of prey. But alas for human wishes! This night proved to be even more "lively" than the previous one, for hyenas and lions simply infested the place, and the soldiers kept firing their guns off as though we were on a battle-field. I lay awake all night long, listening to the fusillade, and wishing my escort at Jericho, and then, at 6.30 a.m., Monsieur started calling outside my tent, "Are you ready, madame?"

I was not ready; as a matter of fact, I was in bed, so I told him to run away and play, for I was in no hurry. Just then there was a peal of thunder, accompanied by plenty of lightning, and the rain came pouring down. I dressed slowly and went outside for a cup of coffee. Monsieur was very angry about the delay in starting, but I told him this was my pigeon, not his, and that he was at perfect liberty to go back to Pweto on the spot, if he chose. He would not hear of this, however, and when the rain had stopped we set out.

After travelling for an hour or so, I entered a village where the natives were in a great state of excitement. A lion had come in during the night, and had nearly scratched down the door of one of their huts. While we were talking to the chief a Belgian officer arrived, with about 150 soldiers, *en route* for Elizabethville. He told us that he had not been able to start early that morning because the soldiers had refused to set out until after six, on account of the lions. He warned us to be careful when passing through the district which he had just left.

After breakfast we bade him goodbye and started off, I in advance with Thomas and my capito. When we had gone some distance we reached a river, where the capito put down my guns and carried me across on his back. While he returned for the guns I crawled up the steep bank, and had just reached the top, when, looking ahead through the long grass, I saw something switching to and fro in front of me. It was the tail of a lion, who was standing staring fixedly into the bush. Even while I watched the great brute made one bound, and I heard the bark of a reed buck. With that, I rolled backwards down the bank I had just ascended, nearly upsetting Thomas, who had not seen the lion and could not make out the reason of my panic, until I gasped "Zimba!"

The capito had now returned with the guns, so I mounted my machine and we started off again. Before we had gone far, however, there was a great roar, and off my bike I fell, while the capito dropped the guns and fled for his life. Thomas stood his ground, and said, "Missisi give me matches; I make fire, Missisi blow gun, Zimba run away!" So he fired the long grass, and I fired the gun, and we stood and listened breathlessly while a little breeze blew the flames ahead of us through the grass. Then I remounted and, followed by Thomas, made yet another start.

Not thirty yards further on we came upon the spoor of a lion which had only just been made, and off we spurted as hard as we could go. In the excitement we took a wrong path, and nearly rode into a herd of impala. As soon as they saw us they were off, and a very beautiful sight it was to

see these graceful creatures jumping high into the air as they ran from us. I was glad I had not been able to shoot at them.

Our camping-place that day was at Kapela, and, on arriving, I was annoyed to find my tent put up in the middle of a very dirty deserted village. Monsieur ensconced himself in a native hut, but I ordered my tent down and had it carried some distance beyond the village and erected in the bush. Monsieur assured me that not for one million pounds would he sleep where I was going to sleep, for the lions had taken twenty-four people in three months from the villages near here. However, I knew that it was fairly safe in a closed tent, with gun and light handy, so I had my dinner and turned in with an easy mind.

I spent a peaceful night, but had a shock next morning when I learnt that a lion had carried off my capito's wife, making off with her into the bush! I set out with the poor man at once, and we followed the spoor of the lion for a couple of hours, but it was a hopeless task, and we never caught sight of the animal nor of the unhappy woman. I returned to camp for breakfast, and afterwards resumed the march, heavy-hearted at the sad beginning to our day.

Our route now lay through some delightful country, for, after crossing some mountains, we entered a vast plain, where, with the aid of my field-glasses, I saw herds of wild game, zebras, and every kind of antelope. Superb orchids grew beside our path, and the most gorgeous butterflies fluttered over the grass. Often I stopped to watch a long train of black cannibal ants, marching four abreast,

and carrying caterpillars, dragonflies, and white ants away with them. Once I witnessed a duel to the death between two of these black warriors, and although I tried to separate them with a piece of grass, I could not do so until one was dead. Then the victor picked him up and carried him off.

At another spot I saw a great disturbance near a white ant-heap which had been knocked over. Some large black ants had made a little hole in the ground, and as the white ants passed near, the black ones flicked up some dust, which knocked their victims into the hole. Then, when they tried to crawl out, the black ants flicked some more dust at them, knocking them back until they were tired out, when the cannibals carried them away.

While crossing this plain a thunderstorm overtook us, and I arrived in camp wet through and tired, but happy after seeing so many beautiful things all through the day. The chief of the village told me that they were seldom troubled by wild animals here, so, after dinner and a bath, I went to bed, contented with the world in general, and feeling fairly sure of a good night's rest.

But, to my disgust, after sleeping for a few hours, I was awakened by the horrid calling of a couple of hyenas quite close to my tent; and this was followed by a great purring still closer to me! I called out to Thomas, to know what was happening, and he replied, "Please, Missisi, stay in tent! Big leopard under tent!" I listened, and, sure enough, the great cat had got between the inner and outer walls of the tent, and was now playing the very deuce amongst my provision boxes! I reached for my rifle, and took a speculative shot through the

side of the tent, aiming at the spot from which the noise of falling boxes came. I did not hit the leopard, but the shot frightened her, and she made off into the bush, leaving me so thoroughly awake that I tried vainly to get another wink of sleep all night.

I was up early next morning, but Monsieur had already started. This did not worry me, however, for I was hoping to get rid of him soon and continue my journey alone. The march was to Kisonga, about four hours through the bush, and I accomplished the journey without any adventures. I found Monsieur with his tent erected in the middle of another dirty village, but my porters had gone further on and had put my tent up in the bush, building me a fine misasa, or dining-room of leaves. I dined fairly early that night, had a bath, and enjoyed the best night's rest it had been my luck to experience for some time. I had meant to stay here the following day, but I felt so fit in the morning that I determined to push on, and at about 6 a.m. set out for Kabele.

Again I had an uneventful trek, and on nearing Kahele was met by the chief about three hundred yards outside the village. I asked him to supply flour for my porters and two chickens for myself, which he did, and I paid him in Belgian money. To my astonishment, however, he implored me to give him some money with the head of "Ingleese Edward" upon it. That a chief in a remote village in Central Africa should ask for English money struck me as being rather remarkable, but I did my best to oblige him, and managed to discover a shilling, one of the few English coins that I had about me. With this he was delighted.

Presently all the villagers turned out in force, and, gathering in front of my tent, entertained me with a native song, which Thomas translated for my benefit. It was, he said, a song in honour of the "first white Princess" whom they had seen, viz., my humble self. And all this for a shilling!

Once again I enjoyed a good night's rest, and early next morning set out for Lukongolwe. The first part of the march was up and up a gradual but very long incline, which I spent over two hours in climbing; but, once arrived at the top, I was well repaid for my labours by the magnificent view that stretched out before me on the other side, with a range of mountains away in the distance for background. I rested here for breakfast, and then, mounting my bike, started to coast down towards the great plain beneath.

It was a charming ride, and I sped along for some time, enjoying myself thoroughly. Then I saw something which made me pull up as quickly as possible and dismount on the spot. The absolutely fresh spoor of three elephants! There was no mistaking it, for when an elephant puts its foot down in soft earth it leaves a hole large enough to have a bath in; and then the grass they tear up and the tree branches they pull down, only elephants leave such marks behind them. And here was every sign, new and distinct, across my path!

When my boys came up they were frantic that I should follow up the trail, although elephants travel fast and the chances were all against our coming up with them. However, I could not resist the temptation, and determined to devote a few hours to the hunt, and then, if we had no luck, to return to the path.

Taking Thomas and two porters, and leaving the fourth boy behind with the bicycle, I therefore set out on the trail which led away at right angles to my own route. We travelled forward at a good pace for nearly two hours, and I was beginning to consider the advisability of turning back, when one of the boys pointed to a bunch of big trees about fifty yards further on, where, as far as I could make out, he thought we might come up with our quarry. We began to creep stealthily towards a single tree that stood a bit to one side of our path, and, having reached it, the boy handed me my rifle and motioned me to shoot.

This was all very fine, but so far I could see nothing to shoot at. However, I rose to a kneeling position, and, keeping my body close against the tree trunk, stared out ahead. For several seconds I could distinguish nothing that bore the slightest resemblance to elephant, and then at last I saw what appeared to be a big brown leaf twitching to and fro in the breeze. I gazed and gazed, and gradually the big leaf took on the shape of an elephant's ear. Then I saw the outline of the great brute's forehead and back. It really was an elephant, but whether one of the three which we had been tracking or no I cannot say.

Taking a deep breath, I slowly thrust forward my rifle, took aim, and pulled, and pulled, and pulled at the trigger, but nothing happened. I looked, and saw the hammer was down at safety. I pulled it back with a click, which, to my excited senses, seemed loud enough to frighten every elephant for miles round! But no, the animal did not move, and, with another deep breath, I aimed—and pulled.

As the rifle cracked everything seemed to happen at once. There was a tremendous crash, followed by loud trumpeting, and I found myself sprinting through the bush after my boys, and wondering what the result had been. Then a chorus of yells reached my ears, and I emerged, panting, through the grass to see my boys executing a dance of triumph near the prostrate form of my first elephant! True, it was not a monster, but the fact that I had knocked it over with one shot filled me with astonishment, and I began to believe that I should develop into a "marksman" yet.

Leaving my boys upon the scene of victory, I set out for the path again, where I mounted my machine and resumed my flying descent into Lukongolwe, accomplishing the journey without having turned a pedal since breakfast-time.

The chief and two Belgian officers met me outside the village and escorted me in. There were many soldiers and carriers in the village, and these people, as well as the villagers, turned out in force to have a good stare at me. One officer told me that they had never seen a white woman before, and it certainly seemed like it; but by now I was thoroughly accustomed to being stared at like a freak from Barnum's, and their attentions troubled me not at all.

An officer very kindly offered me some fresh mutton, which he had got from the Mission at Lusaka, and this I accepted, inviting them to dinner with me. I made them a splendid Irish stew (though I say it who shouldn't), also a champagne and claret cup, and we had a fine dish of asparagus. I made the cup in two enamelled water-jugs belonging to the officers, and after dinner I produced brandy and

cigarettes, and an officer made coffee, and there we sat before a huge wood fire, talking, until after nine o'clock. Then we wished each other good-night, and they set out for their camp in the village, about ten minutes' walk from my quarters.

When they had gone, I turned in, and was soon asleep; but not for long, as the boys who slept near my tent started shouting and yelling, with true native energy, to scare away a couple of hyenas which were prowling around. When this little diversion was over I managed to get to sleep once more, and this time did not wake up again until seven o'clock next morning.

I had decided to rest here the day, so the late awakening did not matter, but I was much annoyed to hear the soldiers practising at a temporary rifle range which they had rigged up, for I had hoped to get some buck, and judged that the noise of the rifle-shooting would scare all the game away.

I went over to the village to have lunch with the officers, and just as we had finished a terrific thunderstorm broke, with the usual tropical rain. When it had finished they sent me back to my tent in a native machila, and I was glad to find that Thomas had been sensible enough to close the tent, putting everything under cover. As there was a trench round the outside of the tent the water had been drained off and my possessions were none the worse for the late downpour.

I was going to dine alone that night, but before dinner my capito told Thomas to ask me to come out and shoot, as he had seen buck in the distance in the bush, and the men would march better if they had some meat. I therefore set out with two gun-bearers,

although feeling very sceptical about seeing any buck after the shooting that had been continued all day long at the range.

However, during the first hour I got a brace of partridges and a guinea-fowl, after which we walked further into the bush until we reached the bank of a small running stream. Here the capito pulled my sleeve, and pointed across to the opposite bank. I looked, and there, about three hundred yards away, was a roan rubbing its back against a tree, all by itself.

The capito was very anxious that we should turn back and cross the water lower down, then try to come up as close as possible to the animal; but I felt sure that by the time we had executed this manœuvre the roan would be "in the next county." I therefore determined to have a slam at it from where I stood, a determination which caused the capito great concern, as he assured me that I should not hit it.

To tell the truth, I was very much inclined to agree with him in this last opinion, more especially as I had never yet attempted a long-distance shot. But I thought this was an excellent opportunity to make a start, and therefore put up my rifle and took aim.

As I aimed the capito continued trying to dissuade me, murmuring, "Mengi! Mengi!" in a hurt tone of voice, which showed his opinion of my markmanship. This was enough to put any one on her mettle, and I continued obstinately to aim, and then pulled the trigger. To my delight (and, to be truthful, astonishment) I saw the animal stumble and fall, but it was up again next moment and off.

Away we went to a shallow part of the little river, and, having got across, hurried to the spot where the

roan had fallen. We soon came upon the blood spoor, which we followed for about three quarters of a mile, and then sighted the animal, standing by some bushes and bleeding badly. I stalked it to within yards, when I fired again, this time putting a bullet clean through its heart.

That night my long shot was celebrated in camp by the delighted porters, who sang songs of gratitude for the meat which I had thus provided.

I dined alone and went to bed early as the following day's march was to be a long one, but there seemed to be fate against my getting a long night's rest if I expected one, and this evening proved no exception to the rule.

Quite early in the night I was awakened from a sound sleep by the most blood-curling yells and screamings, which made me leap out of bed before I knew what I was doing. I called for Thomas, and at the same time he came running up to the tent, exclaiming, "Missisi! leopard kill man! Please come!"

I slipped on a dressing-gown, and went out to see what had happened.

Two hundred yards away from my tent the porters had built a fire, round which they were sitting after supper, when a leopard sneaked up behind them unobserved. One of the men must have turned his head, and as he did so the leopard raised its paw and tore away half his face.

Immediately, raising fearful yells, the other porters flung fire at the brute, and succeeded in driving it off; and now the wretched victim lay there, a dreadful sight to behold!

I hurried back to my tent, got out my surgical

instruments, and went off to sew his face up as best I could. It was a desperate job, and one eye was gone past recovery, but I did what I could for him, and afterwards bandaged his head up. Then I again became a veritable woman and fainted away. It was the most horrible sight I had ever seen outside an operating-room.

This was not a very promising start for the night's rest, and I was not by any means sorry when morning came. I got up at five o'clock and sent on most of my porters, after which I dressed and had a cup of coffee, starting off myself at six, with my kitchen and gun-bearers behind me, as usual.

My trek lay through half a dozen villages, and in every case the whole population turned out to get a glimpse of me. When I appeared they greeted me with the most awful war-whoops and great clappings of hands. A Royal Progress in Europe would not have been in the same street with me, if you judge by noise! When I dismounted and greeted them with, "O Zambo!" there were further whoops and more clappings. Then off I would start again amid hurricanes of applause! It was really very funny.

It was very pleasant travelling to-day, part of the way lying through a dense forest, in which, however, there was but little trace of game, a fact which I attributed to the number of villages in the vicinity. At about eleven o'clock I arrived in camp, to find my tent and misasa all ready, the latter being made of long grass this time, as the capito explained that this was easier to cut than tree branches.

The carriers asked Thomas if all white ladies

had to have misasa built like this. He told them that, coming through Katanga, I had had a large misasa round my tent, combining dining-room and bath-room. Whereupon there was much clapping of hands, and they said that I must indeed be a great Princess to need so much work done for me!

The next day's march was to the Catholic Mission at Lusaka, so I sent a note on by courier, announcing my arrival on the following day. The march passed without incident, and I was met at the Mission gates by one of the Fathers. As I was in my shooting kit, I retired to bathe and change, after which I was presented to the Father Superior. Then we sat down to lunch, being waited on by small native boys who stared so hard and so continuously at me that I felt sure they would either drop the dishes or else that their eyes would drop out of their little round heads. However, they managed to stare and wait at the same time, without any mishap!

I asked my hosts whether there was any game in the district, and they told me there was, but that one would have to walk for a good hour before coming up with it, because all the plain around the Mission was under cultivation. This I saw for myself after lunch, when I walked round with the Father, who showed me coffee, oranges, lemons, all sorts of vegetables, native corn for flour—white and black—wheat, &c., &c., all growing splendidly.

All the Mission buildings were enclosed by a high brick wall and palisades, these precautions being necessary on account of the lions which infested the district.

CHAPTER VI

THE MISSION AT BAUDOUINVILLE—LAKE TANGANYIKA—AN EVENTFUL SHOOT

THE Father told me that only a short time before my arrival a native couple were arguing one evening, after supper, as to which of them should get up and close their hut door for the night. In the middle of their amiable discussion a great lion walked calmly in, picked up the woman, and carried her off. The shouts of her husband quickly roused the village, and the excited inhabitants proceeded to follow the lion into the bush. Their noise frightened the beast so much that he dropped his prey and ran away; but when they came to pick her up the woman was dead. This is indeed a story with a moral; but the lion ought to have walked off with the lazy husband instead of his unfortunate wife!

Another native, suffering from small-pox, was isolated in a hut some distance from the village. One evening while this man was cooking his supper, a lion stepped into the hut. The native, with great presence of mind, promptly threw his boiling pot into the lion's face, which so disconcerted the brute that he beat a prompt retreat.

View of the Church and Mission grounds at Baudouinville.

A Native Laundry with women at work. At Mission at Baudouinville.

The man then re-started his preparations for supper, but before long the lion returned, and, although he was again greeted with the hot pot, this time he was not to be put off so easily, and, picking up the man, he started for the bush. The wretched fellow screamed lustily, and some natives, who were cutting wood in the neighbourhood, rushed to his rescue. Thereupon the lion dropped his prey and disappeared, but the wretched man was so badly mauled that he died from his wounds a few days afterwards.

I slept at the Mission that night, and next morning the Fathers gave me a basket of fresh vegetables, oranges, pineapples, and eggs, which were most acceptable. Then I set out for Kincha, which I reached without incident. I had hoped to get some game here, but there was none to be seen, and I continued my journey for Kalungi.

I now had the good fortune to kill a small bush buck for my carriers, who were sadly in need of meat. The bush buck is a small animal, with a light tan-coloured skin, striped with white from the backbone down over its sides, and having a few white spots. But, small though it was, the buck was duly appreciated by my boys, and the camp was "merry and bright" once more.

The cheerfulness of the camp, in fact, depended chiefly upon the meat supply, the porters' spirits rising and falling according to the accuracy, or otherwise, of my marksmanship. Shooting under such circumstances is, I venture to think, the best possible form of training which the ambitious big-game shot can possibly undergo, the joy of a kill and the bitterness of a miss making one careful

not to waste one's powder or to shoot carelessly. And surely nowhere else but in the bush is straight shooting so much appreciated! The silent camp is an unhappy camp, and if one has missed a buck in the afternoon, the silence that evening comes to one as a mute reproach. But when songs and stories rise up from the native fireside all is well, and the hunter pats him or herself on the back to think of the day's achievements.

My route now led me along a narrow path through the forest, and as I was walking along, pushing my bicycle before me, I suddenly felt something hit my helmet, as though a small brick had been thrown at me. At the same time a great chattering arose, and as I looked round to see what it all meant, a pine cone hit me on the shoulder. I glanced upward and saw that the trees around were full of baboons, who did not seem at all pleased to see me. I therefore laid down my bicycle, took up my rifle, and firing at what appeared to be the leader, brought him down plump. My bullet went clean through his heart, and as he fell his companions vanished as though by magic.

On reaching camp I sent some boys back for the meat. They told me that if I had wounded the animal the others would have come down and torn me to pieces, but whether this is correct or no, I cannot say.

Magonde is only a few hours' march from Baudouinville, and while in camp here I received a letter from the Baudouinville Chef de Poste, asking me when I expected to arrive, as the captain of a small steamer running up the Tanganyika was anxious to leave as soon as possible. As a matter of fact,

this was the first I had heard of the steamer, for it was my original intention to proceed overland.

While I was reading this letter Thomas came rushing up, exclaiming, "Oh, Missisi, white man coming with plenty soldiers and porters. Shall I get some lunch ready for him?" I said, "Yes," and almost as I spoke there was a clapping of hands from my boys, and a Belgian officer hove into sight. When he saw me standing outside my tent he was evidently very much astonished, for although a black boy had come in some days previously to report having seen a white woman travelling alone through the bush, the officer had disbelieved him.

He stayed and had some lunch with me—in fact, to be perfectly candid, he ate most of the lunch, being evidently blessed with a hearty appetite. As for the white bread which Thomas made, he was so enraptured with it that I gave him another piece of it, which he wrapped up in paper and gave to his boy to carry, declaring that he would eat it for supper.

He had just gone off when another boy came into camp with a letter, this time from the Father Superior at the Baudouinville Mission, asking what time I expected to arrive next morning, the news of my coming having evidently reached the Mission. I at once sent word to say that I hoped to be in between 7 and 8 a.m. next day.

I started off on my bicycle at about 5 a.m. in the morning, and had ridden for about an hour through the bush when I emerged on a magnificent road as fine as the Avenue Champs Elysées! As I rode on I saw in the distance ahead an enormous pale-blue flag with a gold star in the centre being borne

towards me. It was the flag of the Congo, and as it drew nearer I saw in one corner the red, black, and gold device of Belgium. A white officer and a detachment of soldiers were marching towards me with this flag, and as they came up I dismounted from my bicycle.

The officer explained that he had come to escort me in, but as I was on a bicycle would I go on to the Mission. I did so. As I rode up hundreds of natives came crowding round to have a look at me, and the noise they made soon brought several of the Fathers out to see what was the matter. At their head came the Catholic prelate, Mgr. Huys, who, on seeing me, came down the Mission steps to greet me with a cordial handshake. I tried to hide myself behind a wisp of straw, and, making excuses for my appearance, asked if I could change into European clothes. But Monseigneur replied, "Oh, madame, as you are a traveller all is excused, so please come in to breakfast, which is waiting for you."

I went indoors with them, and a very cheery meal we had. There were several Belgian officers present, and every one was in the best of spirits. Here, as at the last Mission, we were waited on by small native boys who also stared at me in whole-hearted wonder. After breakfast Mgr. Huys escorted me to the travellers' quarters, where I found a bath awaiting me. While I was preparing for this the natives assembled in great force outside the windows, evidently anxious to have a peep at my skin; but at this I drew the line—also the lattice shutters, and did my best to wash in the dark. The noise outside soon became so great that

I called to Thomas to take out the chicotte and show it; and when he did so peace was restored and the natives withdrew, much to my relief.

When I rejoined Monseigneur, clothed and clean, he took me on a tour of inspection round the Mission. It is a fine institution, and an undoubted blessing to the neighbourhood, not merely a religious foundation, but a sort of great college where the native is carefully equipped for life's battle. We went over the dairy, where cows are milked and cheese and butter are made entirely by the natives; then on to the Mission grounds, which stretched away for miles and presented a perfect picture of successful cultivation. Here nearly every kind of European vegetable was to be seen growing; there were also avenues of lemon and orange-trees, and an abundance of bananas and pineapples, to say nothing of strawberries. Finally we passed through a lovely rose garden, and then went to see the granary, where was stored thousands of pounds' worth of native flour and maize, which, I was told, would in due course be dispatched to various parts of the Congo.

During our walk I heard a chanting in the distance, and half an hour later between two hundred and three hundred natives marched in, carrying salt and baskets of rubber. There were no soldiers with them and no headman, and, in reply to my questions, Monseigneur informed me that the natives round about were in the habit of coming in to the Mission from their different villages, to sell whatever they had; but that they did so of their own free will, and I should therefore look in vain for soldiers or capitos. He added that

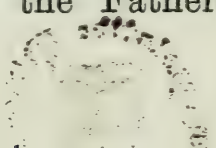
numbers of natives also came in voluntarily to join the Mission and become Christians, a statement which I could well believe, since every one at the Mission seemed to be thoroughly happy and contented.

Of course we visited the church, and I was surprised at its beauty. The building took seven years to complete, and was made entirely by natives. The heavy doors were beautifully carved and polished, carpentry being one of the trades taught at the Mission. The altar consisted of five or six different kinds of wood, and here again the carving reached a very high standard of excellence. The whole building was an eloquent testimonial to the talent of the native craftsman.

I was to sleep that night, Monseigneur informed me, at the Mission of the White Sisters, and thither he conducted me in the evening. It was about ten minutes' walk from the Men's Mission, and I was met at the door by the Mother Superior, who gave me the kindest of greetings.

After a chat with the Sisters, we went in to dinner, but before the meal had proceeded very far a most deafening hullabaloo arose outside the windows; so much so that one could hardly hear oneself speak! One of the Sisters thereupon took a whistle from her belt and blew on it, and immediately there was dead silence, which continued for the rest of the evening. My hostesses explained that the hubbub was a native song, which had been sung in my honour, and that the whistle was a signal for the natives to be quiet and retire to their own quarters.

What the Fathers' Mission did for men the



Sisters' Mission did for women, as I had an opportunity of observing next day. The women were taught sewing, housekeeping, cooking; and there was a big laundry, of which I got rather a good snapshot. As soon as we appeared in the grounds children raced up and asked the Mother Superior to play with them, and we had a game of skipping-rope before going on. As well as the ordinary departments, there was a separate section for women who had been deserted by men, and they were kept here until some native in search of a wife came along. This I thought was a very wise arrangement.

I attended service at the church, and was much struck by the beautiful native singing, while in a loft overhead a small native boy wrestled manfully and successfully with a harmonium.

At the Sisters' Mission we were waited on at meals by small native girls, who, like the boys, had evidently never seen a white woman except the Sisters, for their eyes threatened to drop out of their small heads every moment. After dinner that night the Mother Superior asked me to sing the English National Anthem, and as I sang the Mother and Sisters joined in with me. I do not know whether it was the words or tune they liked, but they kept singing it all through the evening.

I stayed at the Mission for two days, and then set out in the early morning to go down to Lake Tanganyika, carrying with me a very pleasant memory of the kindness and courtesy with which I had been treated by Fathers and Sisters alike.

I was now really alone with Thomas and my porters, since the official reason for my Sous officer's

journey had been to fetch ammunition from Lusaka, a place which I had now passed. It was very pleasant to have got rid of the man, who was a nuisance from the first, and I looked forward with lively interest to the adventures that might lie before me.

The lake is about one hour's journey from Baudouinville, and on my way I was presently met by a courier with a letter for me. From this I learned that some soldiers were in camp on the shores of the lake, and the letter, which was from their commanding officer, invited me to lunch at the mess, as the steamer had gone out on the lake, owing to bad weather, so that I could not go aboard till she returned to the shore.

As I approached the border of the lake I saw before me a great camp where several hundred soldiers and their officers, *en route* for Elizabethville, were resting. When I got in one of the officers brought out a beautiful monkey, which immediately jumped into my arms, snatched a bunch of roses from my dress, and ran away. He was a sly animal, for he would come up and pretend to make love, then grab what he wanted and bolt with his ill-gotten treasure. As a rule he was chained to a tree, and here, sitting on the ground, he would lie in wait for natives, all of whom he detested. Should any luckless native come within reach of his chain the monkey was on him like a knife, and would have a piece out of the man's leg before he knew where he was.

I reached camp just before lunch, and the meal that followed was a very lively one. An officer went off to the guest-house, where one of his comrades was lodging, and returned laden with several bottles of

scent, which he solemnly presented to me, explaining that he did not approve of officers perfuming themselves for the benefit of the blacks—in fact, he feared it savoured of immorality—but that perfume for a lady was different. "If," he added, "there is anything in any of the houses here that you like, please take it. You will be welcome."

That afternoon I went all over their camp, and saw hundreds of soldiers, porters, and their wives, whom I looked at critically. Some were singing, some telling stories, some cooking, while others lay about in cheerful idleness; but nowhere could I discover any signs of misery or of forced labour, nor were any cases of mutilation to be seen. I spent between two and three hours making my round, and then went off and had a rest before dinner.

I thought I would buy some provisions at the military store before leaving, but the prices were a bit too "tall." Sugar was four francs a pound, and I had to pay francs 4.50 a pound for butter. An officer advised me to wait until I reached Ujiji, telling me that I could get everything there for one-quarter the price which I was now paying, so I took his advice.

At ten o'clock that night a letter was delivered from the captain of the steamer to the effect that I must leave at once, as the lake was now calm and he wished me to be on board that night so that he could start first thing in the morning. I therefore got into a native machila, and set off down the precipitous descent leading to the margin of the lake. The officers supplied me with porters for my luggage, and for two hours I was carried down and down towards the water, which we reached at midnight.

The steamer, a small flat-bottomed boat, used for carrying soldiers and ammunition from one point on the lake to another, was waiting, and I went on board at once. There was only one cabin, which belonged to the captain, but he lent it to me, and I went straight to bed, and to sleep.

When I awoke it was daylight, and we were out on the lake. I learned that, through the courtesy of Commandant Olsen, the boat was to be at my disposal for the next stage of my journey, which was a very convenient and pleasant arrangement. The weather remained fine, and we steamed along, without incident, to our first stopping-place, Mpala.

This is rather a desolate island, but it is free from the tsetse-fly, which brings sleeping sickness; and there is a Mission here, to which the natives come from the adjoining islands. I lunched with the Sisters at the Mission, and the Mother Superior told me that a short time before a leopard had rushed into their dining-room, but that she had shoo-ed it away again! "Yes," added one of the Sisters, "she not only drove it off, but wanted to run after it with a stick, and it was all we could do to hold her back. We were very much afraid it would take a child, as it passed through the Mission playground, but the white clothes of the Mother Superior had frightened it so much that the brute ran right away!" Not a bad achievement for an unarmed and elderly lady, I thought.

From Mpala we steamed along to the island of Tenbwe, as the captain said that round a small lake in the centre of this island game abounded. Tenbwe is volcano-shaped, its sandy shore running upward to the crest of a circular hill, or crater, and then de-

scending on the other side to the shores of a little lake in the centre. Up to the top of the circular hill it is just plain sand, but the other side of the hill, down to the lake, is covered with reed grass which grows to a height of between five and six feet.

Well, at about 5 p.m. this eventful evening the captain and I, with a couple of gun-bearers, landed on Tenbwe, intent upon slaughter. Before we had taken a dozen steps over the sand I could see that here indeed game abounded, for the ground was thickly stamped with the fresh spoor of all sorts of game.

On we walked to the top of the hill, and then, "spreading out" a bit, proceeded to beat down towards the lake, as one does when walking up game in England; but of course we could not see each other, owing to the height of the reed grass.

When I had gone some little distance my gun-bearer suddenly pointed, and said "Shoot!" I followed the direction of his finger, and saw a pair of horns sticking up above the high grass about 200 yards away. I could see nothing but the horns, which I proceeded to stalk stealthily, until I had approached to within 75 yards of them. But even now I could see no head, so, raising my rifle, I took aim at where I thought the head ought to be, and pulled the trigger. The rifle went off all right, but nothing else happened, and although my boy assured me that my bullet had gone clean between the horns, there they remained just for all the world as though nobody had been firing at their owner!

It was obvious that the game on this island was not accustomed to being shot at, and it is possible that I should have gone on having pot-shots at that

invisible buck until nightfall had I not happened to hear at that moment the call of the crested crane. Now I was very anxious to bag one of these birds, so, turning at the cry, I looked down towards the lake, and there, sure enough, I saw one of them running along close to the water. So, disregarding the buck, I turned off to the right and began to work my way slowly down towards the lake margin.

I say "slowly" advisedly, for the ground here consisted of one great stretch of messy swamp, into which I sank over the ankles at every step. After expending a good deal of patience and muscle upon this stalk of the crafty crane, I at last found myself quite near the lake and within gun-shot of my quarry.

Looking down, I saw a substantial-looking stone rising out of the mud at my feet, so I naturally stood up on it, glad of something that promised a secure foothold for my shot. Then I raised my gun, and was just pointing it in the direction of the bird when something gave me a tremendous jerk—my gun went off into the air, and I went off (backwards) into the mud, performing one of those half-somersaults which gentlemen on the variety stage at home bring off so successfully.

I sat up in the swamp a bit dazed, and for a few seconds I wondered what on earth had happened, and whether I had struck an enchanted island. Then the truth slowly dawned upon me, as I saw my "stone" slipping rapidly away from me through the mud. That stone was part of a crocodile's tail! The brute had resented my standing upon him, and had moved just at the psychological moment, pitching me and my gun into the mud!

I got back to my feet after a time, but it was not a very easy undertaking, the mud on Tenbwe being of a peculiarly clinging nature. Then, as the luck seemed rather against me, and my clothes were about six times their normal weight, I turned my back on the lake, and prepared to beat a moist retreat back to the steamer. I had scarcely proceeded a dozen yards when my gun-bearer pulled me violently backwards, and I found myself once more securely seated in that luscious mud, a little to one side of the path I had been following. He had only pulled me aside just in time, for in another two seconds I should have walked straight into the jaws of a tremendous crocodile, which was making its way down to the lake.

As I got up for the second time I realised that the whole island was now alive with crocodiles, which my shots had evidently disturbed, and they were now hurrying down through the long grass to the lake.

It had been an eventful little evening's shoot, and no mistake; but the incidents were not all over yet! As I slowly dragged myself back through the grass a rifle suddenly rang out on my right hand, and a bullet came whizzing over my head, so close that both I and my boy once more went down, with a simultaneous movement that would have done credit to a couple of first-class trick artistes.

While I still lay there, wondering what on earth was going to happen next, the captain pushed his way into sight, and cheerily informed me that he had just had a shot at a buck—at least, he had thought it was a buck, but apparently it must have been the top of my pith helmet moving between the grass! I explained, as courteously as I could, that when a couple of shooters set out together, the man on the

left should not double back towards his companion, as it led to misunderstandings sometimes. He grasped my point, and then turned to consider the other side of the question, saying, "Imagine my missing a shot like that! I shall have to practice up my shooting!" I was inclined to agree with him, but thanked my lucky stars that he had not thought of "practising it up" before coming out that evening!

And so, in the end, we actually did manage to reach the boat—without any bag, it is true—but also without any casualties, which was really remarkable when you come to consider the joyous time we had gone through. The first task, so far as I was concerned, was to change my clothes, and as soon as I had got into dry things the humorous side of my late adventures dawned upon me, and I had a good laugh over the funniest shooting expedition which it has ever been my fortune to experience.

Having exhausted the resources of shooting for the moment, I determined to try another sport now, if it were possible, and asked my friend the captain whether there were any fish in the lake. He replied that there were none, but being by nature a disbelieving Jew, I nevertheless determined to prove the fact to my own satisfaction. I therefore got out my fishing tackle, and, having no other bait, put some bread on my hook, and dropped a line overboard. My scepticism was soon rewarded, and I soon landed two or three four-pounders. The captain did not know the name of the fish, but it was very like a fresh-water trout, and very nice to eat.

And here let me say, lest my Tenbwe experiences incline you to think otherwise, that the captain was

a real good sort, and extremely kind and courteous to me all the time that I was with him. He would not, for instance, let me use any of my own food, but insisted upon my sharing his own provisions. Thomas cooked for us, and the captain, like every one else who sampled his cooking, wanted to run away with my boy, whose cleanliness and skill were admirable.

After leaving Tenbwe my thoughts naturally dwelt rather upon the subject of crocodiles, but, strange to say, I never saw one of these creatures on Tanganyika; and I believe it is a fact that they have all gone to the little lake on Tenbwe, which, some say, is an overflow from Tanganyika.

Around all the islands that we passed on Lake Tanganyika I was surprised to observe numbers of natives fishing from small boats. This was a pleasant surprise, as certain writers declare that natives are not allowed to fish on the lake. I sometimes wonder from where these writers conducted their observations of the Congo. If they visited Tanganyika, we must presume that the lake was rough and their digestions weak during their cruise!

As a matter of fact, the lake did get rough while we were on our way to Toa (now called Albertville), and it was not nice going, for the boat kept leaping up and then coming down again on the water with a great bump. This movement had a disastrous effect upon Thomas, who soon became very much distressed. He wanted to get out and walk, otherwise he was of opinion that he would die. "Thomas not like boat," he told me; "won't Missisi walk?" However, we reached Albertville in safety, Thomas still surviving.

Here the Belgian officials were very cheery

and hospitable, and insisted that I should come ashore to lunch with them. They wanted the captain to come as well, but he refused to leave his boat, as the weather was too uncertain. The mess-house was a little way up hill, and when sitting at lunch one could look through the open windows down on to the lake beneath, the steamer being well in view.

We were a very cheerful party, and, this being so, we did not hurry to move when lunch was over. Presently the captain began to sound his whistle, and we knew that was a signal for me to return to the boat. Of course, directly he began to whistle the conversation happened to get interesting, and the more he whistled the more interesting did our talk grow. In fact, that oft-repeated signal seemed to make the function ever so much more enjoyable, and we stuck to our chairs like leeches, with just one eye on the captain to see what he would do next.

When the good man had got thoroughly tired of sounding that whistle we saw him making preparations to come ashore and carry me off by force, so, as we did not really want to put him to inconvenience, we promptly got up and appeared on the hill in time to prevent his having to come ashore for me.

He had evidently told my new friends about the trader, for when I got back on board I discovered that the officials had sent me along a supply of tinned food for my journey.

Our next port of call was to be Ujiji, and our voyage thither was accomplished without any kind of adventure, exciting or otherwise. We arrived off Ujiji at about noon.

CHAPTER VII

UJIJI AND UVIRA

MY first impression of Ujiji can be expressed in one word—Arabs. They seemed to be everywhere, and the shore was plentifully dotted with their tents, as though they had overflowed from the town.

Having had a boat lowered and been rowed ashore, the captain and I walked up through the town to the market-place. Here were many mango-trees and more Arab traders, offering their wares for sale. Meat was being sold for 1s. 4d. for ten lbs.; and loaf sugar at one franc per lb.; but at a German store, where I bought some beer, I had to pay £2 10s. 8d. for twenty-four bottles. This, however, was cheap compared to the 8s. 6d. a bottle which one had to pay in the Congo!

We then walked on to the post-office, where the German official nearly had a fit when he saw me. He asked us to call on the Commandant, and after leaving the post-office we did so, and were invited to dinner that evening. We accepted the invitation, and returned to the steamer for lunch. At 3.30 we went ashore again, and were met by the German official, with a machila.

I noticed that he was carrying a chicotte—the first time I had seen one in the hands of any official, so I asked him why he had it, to which he replied, "Because it is useful sometimes." He escorted us back to the town, stopping on the way to show us the tree where Stanley and Livingstone met. Close by is the ruined house, still standing, in which Livingstone lived when at Ujiji. I got a photograph in which both tree and house appear, the German snapping it for me, after I had focussed the camera.

From here we made a royal progress through the town, every one coming out to have a look at me, when they heard that there was a white woman to be seen. I stopped at one shop and bought Thomas some clothes. The garments were made of white Indian cloth, with a border of gold and red, also a striped red and white jersey to match. This grandeur delighted his heart, and he remarked, "Now Thomas look like English lady's servant; but won't last long, because they are white!" Whereupon I hastened to inform him that they were only to be worn on special occasions.

We went to the Sleeping Sickness Camp next, a very large enclosure, surrounded by a bamboo palisade. On entering the camp I was surprised to see tea-plants, orange-trees, mango-trees, and a well laid-out garden, with plenty of flowers and shrubs, all in thriving condition. The camp is divided into three sections, and here can be seen victims in all stages of this deadly disease. The symptoms vary considerably, some natives becoming bloated, others thin, while very many turn incendiaries. The latter have chains fixed to their ankles and necks, and are guarded by soldiers. Sometimes the patients are

Tree at Ujiji where Stanley and Livingstone met.

Arriving at Ujiji.

violent, and some become harmless lunatics; but perhaps the commonest signs are continuous shivering fits, and the deadly sleep from which they never awake.

I saw people in every stage of the disease at Ujiji, from those who had just entered the first camp to the men and women who were sleeping themselves to death in the third enclosure. Everything possible is done for them at the camp by doctors and attendants; but none may leave without an official permit, and drastic is the punishment for those who break the rule. Eighty strokes with the chicotte is the official penalty, and if the offender faints before the eightieth stroke, he is put into gaol and the balance given him when he comes out again. This compares with twenty-five strokes, the official limit in the Belgian Congo, a fact which I pointed out to the German official, who replied promptly, "Twenty-five strokes is nothing. We give fifty and eighty."

At Ujiji, too, each official walks about the town with a chicotte in his hand; but this I never saw at any post in the Congo; in fact, at many a Belgian post there was no chicotte to be found. This is rather strange when one remembers the fearful pictures of bloodshed and tyranny which have been described by some writers on the Belgian Atrocities in the Congo.

Having been all over the camp, we set out for dinner, and on the way passed a long string of prisoners, returning from work to the gaol. Each man had an iron ring round his neck, by which he was chained to the man before and behind him, and they presented a somewhat grim spectacle.

When we reached the garden of the official's

house I saw a number of crested cranes running about, as tame as chickens; and the captain and I looked at each other reminiscently! I admired them so much that our host kindly offered to give me one, upon which the captain and I burst out laughing. The German asked us why, and I was about to tell him, when I caught an appealing look from the captain, so only told part of the story. I did not accept a bird.

Before dinner we went up on to a little roof garden, for cocktails; and from here we had a splendid view of Lake Tanganyika, also of Ujiji. While having our drinks a fearful shrieking arose, which nearly made me leap out of my chair, under the impression that some one was being murdered. But our host only smiled and said, "It is all right! That is only my baboon, who wants to come and say good-night." He then blew his whistle, and up came a native boy with a big baboon, who jumped into her master's arms and began to sing a little song of joy to him.

The captain and I proceeded to seek safety in flight, as we were not sure whether we should be treated in the same fashion; but the Commandant assured us that while he was present we would be quite safe. So, taking my courage in both hands, I went up to the animal and she shook hands with me; but I was very glad when orders were given for her removal to bed, as these animals are very uncertain with strangers, and a bite from them is no joke.

She was led away, shrieking at the top of her voice, and the Commandant told me that she generally sat in the dining-room while he was at

meals and strongly objected to going to bed before her time.

We had a very delightful dinner, everything being well cooked and nicely served. Our host told me that if I stayed another day he would show me much more of Ujiji, but I was anxious to get on, so declined his kind invitation. We left him at a late hour and got aboard at midnight, starting early next morning to cross the lake to Baraka.

We were travelling all day, and arrived at Baraka about 6 p.m. that evening. As we entered the little bay the captain sounded his whistle many times, and presently a small boat put out from the shore. The captain told me that the Chef de Poste, Baron L'Epine, was in the boat, and I suggested that, for a joke, I should hide in the cabin and give the Chef de Poste a shock by stepping out suddenly upon him while he was talking to my companion.

So I hid before he arrived, and watched him come on board from the cabin. He passed the window without seeing me, but his black servant caught sight of my face, and, standing at the salute, stared at me until I made sure he would lose both his eyes on the deck. Having been discovered, there was nothing to do but come out of ambush, and out I came, and you should have seen the Baron's face, for he was in quite undress uniform!

Having apologised for his clothes—or rather for the lack of them—and after some good-natured abuse of the captain for not having told him there was a white woman on board, conversation became

general, and I made inquiries about the orang-outang which I had been told I might bag here. But Baron L'Epine assured me that this was practically impossible; it was more than a day's march to the haunts of these animals, and that if I meant to shoot one I would want a suit of cast-iron armour from top to toe, because of the terrible wait-a-bit thorns through which a path must be forced.

Two or three of the brutes had been got by natives recently, he said, their methods of hunting being somewhat curious. To begin with, they grease their skins well, and then moving through the bush in a party, they endeavour to separate one animal from the rest. When this has been accomplished, a number of the natives attack the animal from in front, while one of their party slips round behind and thrusts his spear through their quarry's back.

Finding that it is useless to land, I determined to continue my journey next morning, but suggested a little breakfast party on board before starting, which was arranged on the spot. Early in the morning Baron L'Epine came on board again, bringing with him fresh milk, eggs, and chickens, also two bottles of bush-honey; while I gave him in exchange some of the fresh fruit that had been given to me at Ujiji.

He was greatly interested in the way I prepared and cooked scrambled eggs and tomatoes, and declared that he would be able to cook some himself when he went back, but I expressed doubt. Thomas's cooking was also greatly appreciated, but, from a sense of gallantry, I fear, mine was awarded

first place. Be that as it may, breakfast was a great success, and after the meal our guest returned to the shore, while we got up steam and set off for Uvira.

The weather was all right during the day, but during the night the water became rather rough. I was not aware of this at the time, being fast asleep, but when I woke up next morning I was struck by a strong smell of honey, and at once thought of my two bottles, which Thomas had placed in the cabin. I called but no Thomas appeared. Then I whistled, and the captain came along, but still no Thomas. "Where is Thomas?" I asked. "We had it rough in the night," he replied, "and your boy is lying on his back on the deck in the throes of lake sickness!" At that moment Thomas himself appeared, looking very woebegone, and said, "Oh, Missisi, this damned water-boat kill Thomas! Much rather walk!" "Thomas," I said, "I think honey all broken up."

"I told him there was something running out of your cabin this morning," the captain put in; "but he did not seem to mind. I can see that the bottle of honey which you promised me is gone for ever."

And he spoke the truth, for both bottles were broken up and the honey had run out everywhere, even on to the deck. This was very sad, for I know of a wonderful recipe for making lemon-squash (which I will not tell you), in which honey plays an important part, and it was for this that I wanted it.

The lake between Baraka and Uvira is very deep, and in this connection the captain told me rather

an amusing anecdote. Some months before a German and his native wife had jumped into the lake just here, both of them being drowned. When the sad news reached them, the friends of the German naturally wanted to take out letters of administration, but this the German officials refused to allow, because the dead man's body had not been produced. As the captain said, "They were seen to go down, and they never came up any more, but how either of the bodies is going to be produced I don't know!" So it looks as though that estate will have to go unadministered.

We reached Uvira about 6 p.m.—a nice-looking place, with houses coming down almost to the beach. As we cast anchor a couple of officials and some porters put off in an iron boat, propelled by bamboo poles, and came to meet us. The officials had drinks with the captain, and told us that Baron L'Epine had telephoned to say that a white woman was coming to visit them, but that they had not believed him.

Then the problem of getting the luggage ashore arose, and was solved by the simple method of picking up the packages and throwing them from the deck of the steamer into the iron boat. I watched with interest, and wondered whether they would treat me in similar fashion when it came to my turn. They did not do so, but placed a chair in the bottom of the iron boat and a couple of boxes on top of the chair. Then I, being in European dress, climbed on to the edge of the boat and slithered down as gracefully as possible under the circumstances, with my skirt clipped between my ankles, until my feet touched the topmost box.

The porters then pushed our barque towards the shore, and we ultimately hove to some twenty yards from *terra firma* which was as near as the boat could approach the shore. I wondered how I was going to land without getting wet through, and was soon enlightened on this point, for the two officials let themselves down over the side, and stood with the water up to their knees, side by side as though on parade. It was now up to me to climb on to the edge of the boat and let myself down until I found a seat on the shoulders of the officials. Accordingly, I slipped gingerly overboard, and managed to seat myself safely between the heads of my two devoted "carriers." Then, utterly disregarding the usages of civilised society, I flung an arm round each of their necks, they grasped me firmly by either ankle, and shoreward we splashed, arriving at the beach in safety, but weak with laughter.

We then went to the Chef de Secteur's house, where I dined that evening; but, to my surprise, there was no mess here, and I had dinner alone with him. He accompanied me afterwards to the guest-house, which, he said, was ready for my use. When we reached the guest-house, we found Thomas outside. He said, "Missisi cannot sleep here; smell too bad!" And when we went in, sure enough, we were nearly knocked down, all the rooms having been packed with bags of the most villainous-smelling disinfectant that I have ever been near. I was inclined to have my tent put up, but the Chef de Secteur said there was another empty house near, and to this we went. Here there was at least no smell, so Thomas made up

my bed, and I turned in as soon as possible and quickly fell asleep.

I woke early, after a good night's rest, and took a look round my new quarters. What a wonderful sight they presented! The big double-bed on which my single mattress was made up had a border of chicken bones, which had been stuck into the wire mattress all round the edge of the bed by, I presume, some one who liked his meals at night! Then, the whole room was literally inches deep in dust and dirt, such ornaments as old paper, straw, bones, and the dried legs of buck being cast about everywhere. It made me feel creepy to look at all this confusion, and I hurriedly jumped out of bed and ran into the next room, only to find things were just as bad there. I determined that Thomas should clean the place as soon as possible, and, having hastily dressed, I set him on to do so.

While Thomas was busy cleaning up a note came from the Chef de Secteur, asking me to dine with him at five that afternoon, and cancelling the luncheon to which he had originally invited me. Afterwards I discovered the reason for this change, which was that he had enjoyed a rather too delirious evening on board with the captain, and was suffering from the inevitable headache that morning.

As the Chef's lunch had fallen through I waited in hopes that some one else would favour me with an invitation; but I waited in vain. At last, in despair, I sent Thomas out to get me some meat; and in due course he came back with some, but to say that it was tough would have been a gross libel on that joint. When cooked it was of the

consistency of granite, and I soon resigned the hopeless task of getting my teeth into it.

How the weary, hungry hours dragged by that day, and how delighted I was when the magic hour of five approached! I was quite ready to start when a young officer called to escort me to the Chef's house, and visions of the succulent feast awaiting us filled me with new hope. But, alas and alack! fresh disappointment was in store for me! For at our host's house I could discover no signs of dinner, but, instead, we sat round and talked and had drinks, and had drinks and talked, until I felt that I should certainly die of starvation before the next meal came along.

After about two hours of this, to me, awful ordeal, the Chef happened to leave the room for something, so I turned to my escort and murmured, "Oh, Heavens! Where *is* dinner? I am dropping with hunger, for I have had nothing to eat since last night!" Are you hungry?" he replied; "shall I give him the hint?" To this I replied, "No, he might be angry; but why did not some of you ask me to lunch to-day?" I then discovered that there was no mess of any kind here, but that the officials all messed at home. I also gathered that they were not on the very best of terms with one another, at any rate, not so friendly as were the officials at most of the posts through which I had passed.

Well, another weary hour passed by, and then, somewhere after eight o'clock, dinner actually was served. That brought it up to twenty-four hours since my last meal, and although this feast was abominably cooked and worse served, I ate every-

thing I was offered, and thanked Heaven fervently for my good dinner!

When the pangs of starvation had been thus dissipated, I thought it would be rather a good idea to show my new friends how food ought to be cooked, so I invited them to lunch with me next day, meaning to give them a little object-lesson. It was rather a rash venture, as I had nothing to offer them! But I was counting upon the foraging capacities of the faithful Thomas, who had never yet failed me in these matters. When I got back that evening and told Thomas what I had arranged, he replied, "All right, Missisi, Thomas get chickens, but think we must buy vegetables."

Then followed an uneventful night, and next morning I was up early, helping Thomas prepare for the luncheon party. He had already brought in some chickens, which he said the natives had given him "for the white lady"; he had also been to the Chef de Poste to ask where he could find vegetables, and that gallant gentleman had responded nobly by sending along turnips, carrots, potatoes, and onions. So far so good, but now I suddenly remembered that the usages of civilisation demand knives, forks, plates, glasses; so I sent round a message to the officials, asking them to bring their own!

Shortly before twelve o'clock their boys began to arrive, each laden with the crockery and cutlery of his master. By this time Thomas and I were hard at work, for, not being sure as to the exact age of the chickens, I had put them on to boil early. They turned out splendidly, and we served them with rice, onions, and mashed turnips; we also had

scrambled eggs, and a salad and cheese. The officials turned up at one o'clock, and quickly showed their appreciation of the feast. Every item was A1, but, oh, when Thomas brought forth the beer—it was indeed a case of "The Song that Reached my Heart"!

Of course they wanted to take Thomas away from me, every one of them wanted him for his own, which was only human, seeing that they had not tasted such a well-cooked meal since they left Belgium.

During lunch I broached the subject of my journey to Luvungi, for I had determined to resume my march next day, and of course wanted porters. I had heard that the porters in these parts were very bad, so thought I would ask for a small escort of soldiers; but when I made my request to the Chef, he replied that he could not spare me any soldiers from the post. This was rather a surprise, because I had been offered soldiers at all the other posts—when I did not want them—and now, when for the first time I did want an escort, it was refused. Such is life!

He said he would have porters ready for me next morning, and assured me that the men he supplied would be good ones, under a first-class capito, who would see that they carried their loads well, marched diligently, and got into camp in good time. This sounded very nice, so I thanked him, and left it at that.

I then asked permission to see the Sleeping Sickness Camp, as I wanted to take some photographs, and he promised to call for me at three o'clock, so that I could do so. But, alas for the effects of a

good lunch, he did not call for me till long after the appointed time, about 5 p.m. to be precise, and it was too dark to take photographs.

The camp is about half an hour's walk from the town, close to the mountains, and away from everything else. It seemed a bare and dreary place after the camp at Ujiji. While we were walking round a native with a long spear suddenly rushed at my companion, brandishing his weapon and talking excitedly. I thought our last moment had come, so did the official, judging by his face! But, as a matter of fact, the poor creature was only telling us how he was going off to some battle. He was one of the sleeping sickness patients, and had, by some means, got hold of the spear. While he was still brandishing it a soldier came up and took it from him. The man then followed us round the camp, asking that his spear might be given back to him, until at last the official called for a couple of soldiers and had him taken away.

We returned to the post by a different route, passing on our way a magnificent waterfall, from which the native water supply is obtained. Then I had dinner and went to bed.

My plans for the following day were to send my porters on early, with instructions to go straight on to Bolinga, a four hours' march beyond the end of the lake. I, on the other hand, was going to the end of the lake by the iron boat, taking with me my kitchen and bicycle. On disembarking I was to be met by a machila and a mule. This animal the Chef had offered to lend me, so that I could ride it up Mount Camaneola, a very steep mountain which I should have to negotiate a few days

later. I was to camp at Bolinga the following night.

Having made these plans, I got up very early in the morning and turned out to select the porters for my march. I found that the men who had been ordered by the Chef had not turned up, so he had got a number of workers from the post for me to choose from. A lazier, weaklier-looking set of good-for-nothings I never clapped eyes on, but I had to make the best of a bad job, so selected twenty-five of the least disreputable, and a capito to look after them. I took more than I actually wanted, as it seemed highly probable that they would want to change their loads pretty frequently, to give each other a rest.

When I had chosen my men, I loaded them up, and packed them off for Bolinga, with their capito. Then I sent the machila and the mule off on their journey to the end of the lake, the mule being in charge of the Chef's own mule-boy. I had got the whole lot of them away by about six o'clock, and an hour later I went on board the iron boat, having first of all had my coffee and mended a few (!!!) punctures which ornamented my bicycle tyres. My method of going aboard this morning was "pick-a-back" on the back of a nigger. It was even more undignified than my manner of coming ashore two days earlier, I fear, but it seemed to be the only way of getting to that wretched boat.

I bade my friend the captain a touching farewell before setting out, but one of the officials insisted on coming as far as the end of the lake with me, and soon we were being poled along over the smooth waters, with the freshness of the early morning air striking gratefully on our faces.

When we had been going about three-quarters of an hour it struck me that we were approaching rather too near to the shore, and I called to Thomas to know whether this was not so. There was no need for an answer, as next moment we were in the midst of a cloud of tsetse-fly which covered everyone and everything like locusts. The next half-hour was an exciting and busy one for all of us, as we smote and smote at the hovering horrors that swarmed everywhere at once. Handkerchiefs, clothes, anything that came handy, was wielded in the general slaughter, while the boatmen turned her head from the shore and worked us out into the lake again as quickly as possible. Suddenly, as swiftly as they had appeared, they disappeared again, and we were left in peace to recover our breath after this fierce battle with the sleeping sickness fly.

I was told by a doctor that these flies rarely go far out over the lake, and only go from two hundred to three hundred yards inland, their favourite and general haunt being along the edge of the water. They are hideous creatures anyway, and my heart always gave a great throb whenever I saw any of them near me. How I used to bolt on such occasions! I would rather hear a lion roar than come within sight of the tsetse!

At the end of two hours we reached the end of the lake, and I bade my friend the official goodbye, and went ashore to find my machila and the mule.

I found a good deal more than I bargained for! Not only were the mule and machila there, but every single one of the porters, who ought to have been going on to Bolinga! There they were, every

man jack of them, squatting calmly on the ground, awaiting my arrival.

When Thomas asked why the Humpty Dumpty they had not gone along the route they were ordered to go, they replied that as the machila was to await me here, they thought they would wait too, so that we could all travel together. These sentiments of amiable sociability roused Thomas to heights of eloquence which did credit to his early education. The language was Swahili, so I did not understand all its niceties, but he evidently used all the best words, for their effect upon the squatting carriers was simply electric. They leapt to their feet with incredible agility, seized their loads, and scuttled off like a lot of rabbits, while I stood and laughed until the tears rolled down my cheeks.

The road to be traversed was deep sand, and as the day had now become rather too hot for walking comfortably, I mounted the mule, man-fashion, and started off.

On my left stretched a magnificent range of mountains, and to my right there spread out an enormous plain that ran right away to the skyline. Scattered about on this plain were numbers of little huts, the whole presenting one of the most charming pictures which I had so far seen during this expedition.

For two hours I rode forward thus, and at the end of that time halted for lunch. Then I found that one of my porters, who carried chairs and tables, had deserted. This did not worry me very much, because I had a few spare men, one of whom I set to carry the deserter's load. Half an hour later I was off again, still in the best of good

spirits, and looking forward to a pleasant and uneventful march to Bolinga.

Alas for the pride that goes before a fall! I had proceeded but a short distance when I found that two more porters had deserted. I sought out the capito, and quickly found him, sitting down with some other natives, enjoying a peaceful pipe! I asked him why he had halted; why he had allowed the other men to put down their loads and run away; and he answered as coolly as possible—

"If, Bibi, they want to go, they go! And I wanted to have a smoke, so I have one!"

CHAPTER VIII

I EXPERIMENT IN "FORCED LABOUR"

THE insolent reply of the capito made me very angry, and I realised that unless I put my foot down there was going to be trouble. So, picking up my chicotte, I informed the man that if he wanted to smoke again he would have to wait till we reached camp, and that if another porter deserted he would receive twenty-five strokes, which would, perhaps, make him look after the remaining men more carefully and make him want to smoke less!

Then, remembering all I had read about "forced labour" in the Congo, I turned to the natives with whom he had been smoking, and told them they would have to carry loads for me to Bolinga. At the same time I picked up my gun, and added that if they attempted to run away before we reached camp, I would shoot them!

This was of course sheer bluff, but they did not guess the truth, and asked me whether I would pay them at Bolinga and allow them to return. I agreed to do so, and they picked up the loads and set out. We resumed our march, and had scarcely been going an hour when I found three

more loads on the road, and found that three more porters had deserted!

As luck would have it, we happened to be passing a native rest-house at the time. These rest-houses have been erected by the Belgians for the use of porters travelling between the posts, and here the natives can cook and sleep during the course of their journeys. In this particular rest-house there were a number of natives just then, with Government loads, bound for Luvungi. Seeing these men, Thomas said to me, "Take one, Missisi, and I take two, and make them carry!" It was a happy thought, and the fact that they were on Government service rather added to the fun of the thing; so Thomas and I bore down on them, and, without more ado, grabbed the three most likely-looking!

At first they remonstrated, but the sight of the gun and chicotte seem to reassure them, and they recognised the great truth that discretion is the better part of valour! They asked what would become of their Government loads, and I replied that the other porters would look after them until they returned from Bolinga, as I knew quite well that when porters travel alone, without capito or soldiers, as these were doing, they take their own time about a journey, and make a one day's march into three. So they consented to come, picked up their loads, and off we went.

But the man I had grabbed was a wicked-looking individual, and I felt quite sure that he intended to bolt at the very first opportunity. I therefore walked close behind him, determined, if possible, to check his running tendencies when they became

apparent. We walked for some distance without incident, and then we approached a sort of little spinney, to reach which we had to cross a small stream. As we were about to cross the stream my "forced labour" man flung down his load, gave a shout, and leapt away. As he jumped I grabbed him by the sheepskin which comprised his clothing, but the "suit" did not hold; in fact, it came away in my hand, and away went my gentleman into the bush, without a stitch to his back!

What a sight he presented, and how I laughed! So this was the Congo, where forced labour was so rampant! Forced labour, indeed; it was a perfect pantomime, and I enjoyed myself thoroughly, although somewhat hot and tired.

But the fun had only just commenced, and presently I came upon two more loads lying in the road. One of these was my case of beer and the other my kitchen, two really important items which must be carried with us at all costs! Being hot and thirsty, I took out a bottle of beer, and, getting Thomas to knock the head off, I had a drink. Then Thomas said, "We wait here, sure to find somebody carry these." So I sat down, lit a cigarette, and waited.

We waited about twenty minutes, and then, sure enough, there came into sight a number of natives, who were carrying cases of Government ammunition upon their heads. Like a couple of beasts of prey, Thomas and I lay in wait for them, and, as they came up, we leapt to our feet and rushed upon them, each of us grabbing a couple! On this, the others dropped their loads and fled into the bush as hard as they could run, while we told

our captives that they were to carry our loads to Bolinga.

After much palavering, the men consented to carry the loads thither, if I would pay them off when we got there, and this of course I agreed to do. They then picked up the loads, and as they did so their companions popped their heads out of the bush, where they had been hiding, and began to jeer at them. This I knew would never do, so I lifted my gun and fired over the heads of the jeerers, on which they disappeared once more, like greased lightning.

I may here say that we ought to have reached Bolinga at 2 p.m., but, as a matter of fact, I thought myself lucky to get in when I did, soon after sundown. I paid off my forced labour men, who returned to the rather less important job of Government carriers, and then went to see what arrangements had been made for me. There were none. No tent up, and nothing at all done; and when it came to the point I found that not one of my porters even knew how to erect a tent. They were a bright lot!

However, my ever-ready Thomas soon had the tent up and the bed made, and, as I was too tired to eat, I drank a bottle of beer, and turned in. Tired as I was, sleep would not come, a plague of tiny flies, that bit harder than any mosquito, crawling in through my mosquito-net and worrying me to death. Then a noise of native singing reached my ears, and I shouted to Thomas to know what it meant. Thomas said, "Porters carrying loads to Luvungi going to sleep here to-night!" These were the men whom we had first overtaken that

day at the native rest-house, and as they seemed to be in such good spirits that they could not stop singing after supper, I told Thomas to tell them to be quiet. He did so, but it had no effect, so I got up and fired my gun into the air, when silence at last fell upon the camp.

Finding sleep impossible, I at length got up, put on my coat, and went outside. It was a little too warm, but otherwise a glorious night, with a great full moon lighting up the country all around. Thomas appeared to be as sleepless as I was, for I presently met him wandering about; and he suggested that we should strike camp and continue our march by moonlight. This seemed to me a good suggestion, so I went back and dressed; then called up the porters.

Four more had deserted!

I thought I could easily adjust this by seizing some of the singing gentlemen who were bound for Luvungi; but evidently they had had enough of me, for when I went to look for them I found that they had all set out again, and not a sign of them was to be seen! This was desperate; but Thomas now came up to say that the capito knew of a village near by where we could get plenty of porters. I and the capito therefore set out for this village.

We had to pass through the bush to get there, and as we walked we passed any amount of game which the capito showed great anxiety for me to shoot. I, however, was after "Man" this journey, and, knowing that all the able-bodied men would run away if they had warning of my approach, I resisted the temptation to fire.

At last we reached the village, and, if you will

believe me, not a single young man was to be found there. The only man in the whole place was a poor old gentleman, with a broken leg, who was doing his best to get away into the bush as fast as possible. It was evident that my singing friends had given the village warning, and that every able-bodied man had sought safety in flight, hearing of my possible approach!

Somewhat ruffled, I turned back to my camp, and as we walked Thomas explained to me that he had misunderstood the capito, who had really said that there was a lot of game to be got in the bush near by. Hence his anxiety for me to shoot! As it was, I had missed both porters and game.

Well, it is no good crying over spilt milk—or a shortage of porters—so I doubled the loads, promising the men presents if they walked well; but, even so, there were still some packages over, and so I determined to load up the mule. I began to do so, but had not reckoned for the intelligent animal's attendant, who evidently belonged to the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and protested loudly that the animal was not intended for loads, but only to "carry the Bwana," his master.

Thomas told him to mind his own business, while I put the tea-basket and various other articles upon the beast's back. It was a healthy animal, and, speaking seriously, there was nothing outrageous about the load which I allotted it; but the boy continued to protest, and we sent him off, grumbling as he went.

Then I prepared to start, but found, to my disgust, that one of my wretched bicycle tyres had punctured, and of course all the repairing outfit had

been sent on ahead; so there was nothing for it but to push the machine, as my bicycle boy was carrying a load.

Thomas and I therefore set out, it now being about midnight, but had not gone far when we found a basket of rice in the middle of the track. It was a basket which I had put on to the mule, and that wretched mule boy had taken it off as soon as he got out of our sight and left it behind. Of course, we could not afford to leave it, so Thomas had to add to his burdens by carrying it.

He placed it on his head, but as he was carrying two rifles and a gun as well, I asked him if it was too much, to which he replied, "Oh, no Missisi; you having too much trouble with these damned black people. Thomas sorry for Missisi!" So I smiled upon him, and on we went; but, oh, the weariness of that journey! When we came to steep, stony declines I had to carry the bicycle down, and then I had to carry it up the other side, and when we got there, I had to push it along the flat, until I felt a loathing for all and every bicycle, and wished this one was in a place not marked on the map.

For four and a half hours we trudged doggedly forward through the bush, and then at last the sun began to rise, and, tired as I was, I could not help admiring the beauty of the scene around me. On my left was the great moon, and on my right the rising sun, just beginning to strike upward through the blue-grey sky, which resembled the colour of hydrangeas. As the sun grew stronger and the moon fainter all the voices of the tropical night gradually grew fainter and died away, while the

beautiful freshness of early morning filled my weary nostrils with new life.

I stuck to it a bit longer, and then at last my feet refused to move another step, and, throwing my bicycle into a bush, I dropped down at the foot of a tree, and closed my eyes. Thomas said, "Next camp not far off. I go bring brandy, sparklet, and donkey!" It was a happy thought, and I nodded drowsily, while he went off to carry out the suggestion.

While I lay there, half asleep, the porters who were bound for Luvungi, and who had evidently been travelling by another route, came out from the bush near me, and passed stealthily where I dozed. These were my singing friends, some of whom I had hoped to commandeer earlier in the night, but now that the chance had come I was too dog-tired to capture any of them. They slipped past me, I remember, on tip-toe, fearful lest I should awake and grab some of them; then disappeared from view as noiselessly as they had come.

About an hour afterwards Thomas came back, with the brandy, the sparklets, and the mule; and having taken a fairly stiff "B. and S.," I scrambled on to the animal's back and rode into camp, feeling very ill. This time my tent was up and my bed ready, so I rolled off the mule and lay down just as I was. My temperature, I found, was 104·1, so I took twenty grains of quinine; then Thomas brought me a glass of champagne, which I drank off and knew no more for twenty-six hours.

When I woke up my clothes were dripping wet with perspiration, but my temperature had dropped to 103. I took more quinine and some hot tea;

and then Thomas told me that *all* the porters, except the capito, had deserted. I did not feel that I cared just then what the porters had done, but told Thomas to send the capito to Luvungi for a fresh supply of men and a machila. This, however, he had, like a sensible boy, already done the day before.

Just then the chief of the village came in and said he would supply me with porters to Luvungi. He brought with him a present of fresh milk, saying he was sorry the Bibi was ill in his village. I got Thomas to thank him for his kindness, and to tell him that if no porters arrived from Luvungi that night, I would take his men the following day.

When he had gone, Thomas got all the cases ready, while I slipped on a loose dress and a big coat over it, so as to be prepared to start if the men arrived. At about 5 p.m. they did come in, with a machila and two capitoes. Each man picked up a load and went off; then I got into the machila, which was carried by four of them, with four others in reserve. Thomas followed, carrying the tea-basket, and another man brought up the rear with chairs and bedstead.

For two and a half hours I endured the agonies of the damned in that machila! I was deadly sick the whole time, and as it grew darker the journey became more unpleasant, as the men could not see to pick their way. At last I called a halt, had my bed put up, and lay down. The men lighted a huge fire, and Thomas made me a cup of tea, after which I fell asleep.

I must have slept some time, for when I awoke the moon was well up; so I called the men,

and off we started once more. Two miles further on, near a stream, we found the rest of the porters, whom we awakened, and the march was resumed. I then discovered the reason of my sickness while in the machila. The porters in the south carry the machila pole on their shoulders, but the men of the north place it on their heads. My men had been carrying on their heads, but, with their usual idiocy, had placed the tallest men in front and the shortest men behind, so that I had been travelling with my feet higher than my head! Having adjusted this matter, I resumed my journey in comparative comfort; but had not proceeded very far when I heard great yells coming from behind, so, calling a halt, I waited to see what new trouble had sprung up. Soon Thomas came running up, with the mule boy tied to his wrist by a piece of rope. I asked what was the matter, and Thomas replied, "This man take all things off donkey, and begin to make off for nearest village, when Thomas see him and know he desert! Oh, Missisi, please beat damned beast, he make plenty trouble with other porters that run away!"

I was very angry at the man's ingratitude, for I had been particularly kind to him in the way of extra food and native beer; so down he went on the ground, and Thomas was soon wielding the chicotte to some purpose. When he had given fifteen strokes I told him to stop, and, addressing the man, told him that if he brought the mule into Luvungi he should be let off the balance of ten strokes. He promised to do this, and went off with Thomas to load up the mule again.

When we were still a two hours' march from

Luvungi I called another halt, in order to have some tea. Thomas untied the man from his wrist while he made tea for me, but when he went to look for the blackguard afterwards he found the mule's load lying on the ground, but of the mule and its attendant he could see no trace, for they had both vanished! It was evident that the Fates intended me to walk up Mount Camaneola!

That was my last mishap on this eventful march, and I reached Luvungi without further incident.

The Chef de Poste was ill in bed, but a room in the guest-house had been prepared for me, and I was not long in getting into bed. I took another dose of twenty grains of quinine, for I felt as though red-hot needles were being thrust up and down inside my head, and thought I must have slight sunstroke as well as fever. My thirst was absolutely unquenchable, and I drank glass after glass of milk, but still felt as though my throbbing throat were on fire.

As the weary hours passed I grew worse, and all the time, with infinite patience and gentleness, Thomas waited on me, bringing me everything he could think of, and doing all he knew for my comfort. At last his voice broke in upon my confused thoughts: "Oh, Missisi, not going to die!" he said; "not going to leave Thomas all alone in strange land! No money, no friends! Missisi mustn't talk so loud, she too sick! Please get well!"

Then it dawned on me that I must have been half-delirious, and with an effort I pulled myself together and asked him for the "little black stick" (the clinical thermometer), which I kept in a black case.

My temperature was 107·2 and it seemed to me that the end must be very near. I took an injection of one grain of morphia, made some money up into a packet, and gave it to Thomas, telling him to go home next day if I died, and to take my keys to the sick Chef de Poste before he left Luvungi. Then I told him to go away, and dropped back on my pillow.

All the world seemed to go spinning before my eyes after that, and I flew from scene to scene, from country to country, like some lost spirit adrift on the wings of the wind. Every picture was clear-cut and distinct before my eyes, passing slowly like a cinematograph film, but I had no part or place in the scenes I witnessed, and none heeded me as I passed.

Now I was under the lofty palms of Tahiti, where brown-eyed women lazed through the sunny hours, or ground the root of the Kava into their native drink; and then, while the splendour of the South Seas still shone in my eyes, the scene had changed, and I was away in the Western States, where villainous-looking Chinamen worked as miners, and all was noise and hustle. People and places I had known in every corner of the globe came rushing from the past in bewildering succession; and then the soft notes of sweet music reached my ears, a hundred lights surrounded me. I was back in one of London's well-known restaurants, with familiar faces upon every side.

There were dear friends, dining at the little round tables, under the pink lights, happy, laughing, talking—and yet they took no notice of me. They had forgotten me! I was there amongst them, but

I could not catch their attention; I was alone, and, oh, so lonely! . . .

A ray of fleeting consciousness struck through the delirium, the brilliant scene died away, and I found myself staring up through a big square hole at the beautiful moon which shone down so calmly on my sufferings. In some dim way I knew at that moment how I was still in the guest-house, and ill, but before I could fully realise it, the knowledge slipped from me, and oblivion swept over my throbbing brain.

I knew no more for days, and then I suddenly awoke, and there was water everywhere—dripping from my hair, running over my face, streaming on the ground in rivers. Where was I? What had happened? I gazed round, and there was Thomas standing by my bed. "What is it?" I asked, still bewildered.

"Thank God, Missisi not dead!" he answered. "I here many days, and Missisi talk much about pain in head. Then Thomas get frightened and take down hair, and all the time pour cold water slowly on Missisi's head, until Missisi talk no more and go to sleep, and Thomas heart not so sad. Now please drink milky."

I lay back and slowly realised what a narrow squeak I had had. But for Thomas I must certainly have died, and Luvungi would have spelt Finis to my last earthly journey; as it was, his patience, fidelity, and intelligence had saved my life.

My temperature was now 104, so I took twenty grains of quinine, had some more water poured over my head, drank two glasses of hot milk, and then slept soundly until evening. By then my tempera-

ture had dropped to 103, and I was able to take some chicken broth which Thomas had made. My head was much better, the feeling of tightness having gone from the temples, while the throbbing had almost ceased. After drinking the broth I again fell asleep, and did not wake up until morning, when I was quite sensible, though horribly weak. The fever had now left me.

Talking to Thomas, I was greatly amused to hear about his experiences with my thermometer. I had, some time previously, taught him how to use it by placing it under one arm. "When it goes over red mark," I had told him, "Missisi got bad fever; when it goes up to black figures Missisi very bad." Thomas now told me that while I was delirious he had put the thermometer under my arm and been greatly frightened at the way the mercury went up. He had tried to shake it down again, but it would not go, so at last, in desperation, he had put it into cold water and it had gone down—a truly simple method of bringing your patient's temperature back to normal!

Feeling much better now, I made Thomas move my bed out into the centre room of the guest-house, as there were no doors to this apartment, and I could look right out on to the plain without moving from my mattress. Outside, in front of the guest-house, my luggage and provisions were piled up, and while I lay, looking over the plain, I saw many big crows hovering about the neighbourhood. Soon they came right up to the guest-house, and one of them hopped in under the verandah and calmly carried off one of my eggs. These crows are twice as big as the English bird, and have a white ring

round the neck and a breast half-white. They measure over a yard from tip to tip of the wings, when spread out, and are more impudent than the crows at Calcutta, which is saying a good deal. When I felt strong enough I sat up and shot at them with my 12-bore. As a matter of fact, the birds act as scavengers, and it is *defendu* to kill them, but I did not know this at the time, so continued to shoot them.

Thomas told me that while I was ill some soldiers had come to drill just outside the guest-house, and that whenever the bugle sounded I nearly jumped out of bed. Fearing that this was bad for me, he went out and asked them to go away, "because Missisi not like noise." The officer, he said, was rather indignant at first, but eventually they did move away. I saw this officer one day when I was getting better, but he did not mention his annoyance to me. On the contrary, he asked whether I would like to see the vet., who was very clever. There was no doctor there, he explained, so they always sent for the vet. when they were ill. I thanked him for his kindly intentions, but thought I could pull through all right this time without troubling the gentleman in question.

And now, as always, arose the problem of moving on, or, in other words, the porter difficulty. I found that the Chef de Poste, who you will remember was ill, had been very kind during my own illness, sending me fresh milk, filtered water, lemons, eggs, pigeons, &c., besides sending messages two or three times a day to find out how I was getting along. So now I told him that I wanted to set out in two days' time, with porters and a machila and team;

and these he promised should be ready for me. I therefore felt that there was nothing more to worry about just then, and lay in bed, at peace with the world, saving up my strength for the march.

Strange to tell, although I had taken 170 grains of quinine in nine days, I felt none of the after-effects, such as deafness or sickness, which generally follow such wholesale dosing, and was quite prepared for my journey when the time arrived.

The porters provided by the Chef de Poste were awaiting me on the morning fixed for my start, also a machila; and, having sent the porters on ahead, I got into the machila, and was soon *en route* for Camaneola. I must have fallen asleep just after starting, for I remember nothing about the day's journey until I was awakened by the machila being lowered in order that I might get out. It was about 6 p.m., and the march was over!

I felt much better, the sleep in the open air having evidently done me good, and getting up, I found myself in one of the prettiest camps that I had seen. My tent was up in an open space before the guest-house, bordered by beautiful and lofty palm-trees, the leaves of which spread out overhead like a soft green roof. All round beyond the palms there ran a high bamboo palissade to keep natives away, as the village was fairly close. The camp looked like a fairy bower in the midst of a palm garden.

The chief of the village and his headmen were awaiting me with fresh milk, eggs, chickens, a goat, and a sheep. I bought two chickens, for which I paid half a franc, but he would not take payment for the eggs and milk, saying they were a present

for the Bibi Bwana. He was a splendid-looking man, over six feet in height, and with rather fine features. He wore the usual cloth draped over one shoulder, and from the wrists to above the elbows his arms were covered with copper wire bracelets threaded with beads. They must have been a tremendous weight to carry about, but they were a sign of his wealth.

The chief asked me many questions, and while we talked in the guest-house a puff of wind blew out one of the candles, so Thomas produced my electric torch. As soon as this was turned on the chief and his men stampeded, but were brought back by Thomas, and persuaded to examine the torch. They tried to turn it on, but could not do so; I therefore took it in my hands and shook it at the moon, when, behold, it at once flamed up! Then, putting it out, I handed it back to the headman, but though he and his companions shook it at the moon many times, the light would not come, and they declared that I must be a great sorceress. Thomas assured them that I was, and told them that if I took my gun and fired into the air my bullet always came down and hit an antelope. He did not mean this to be a sarcastic description of the way I took aim, but explained to me, "These fools believe anything. Thomas make them think Missisi very clever, and all then goes well!"

The chief was suffering from bronchitis, so I gave him some medicine, and told him to return to his village at once and keep himself warm. With many salaams he and his headmen then departed, while Thomas went off to prepare my dinner.

I turned in early that night, for next day the

ascent of Mount Camaneola lay before me. It was, of course, for this mountain that the mule had been lent me, but as Fate had decreed that the animal should be taken from me, there was no alternative but to go up the mountain on foot, much as I hated climbing up steep heights.

I spent a peaceful night, and was up at five o'clock next morning, ready for the great undertaking. As I looked up at the heights above me I wondered whether I should ever get to the top, and felt rather doubtful about it. But the traveller must take the rough with the smooth, and there was no choice but to go forward; so forward I went, murmuring, "Excelsior!" and hoping that I might be more fortunate than the young man in the poem!

CHAPTER IX

NYA LUKEMBA AND BOBANDANA

THE mountain was very steep and very rocky, and covered with thick bush grass that sprouted up high above my head. I had to strike out through this like a swimmer, as I ascended, and all I can say is that if swimming is half as tiring, it is not a sport I would care to master! So weary did I at last become that I gave up the striking-out part of the programme, and sent a man on ahead to cut a path through the grass for me. I could then devote all my energies to scrambling upward over the never-ending succession of sharp rocks that stretched on ahead of me.

From 5 a.m. until 1.30 p.m. I crawled up that wretched mountain, heartily cursing the mule boy who had so treacherously deserted me, and wishing that I had given him those extra strokes with the chicotte which were due to him! However, all things come to an end in time—even the climbing of a mountain—and so it came about that at 1.30 I actually found myself on the top of Mount Camaneola. And what a beautiful view there was from the summit, as I looked down over the country below, through which a river

wound for miles and miles, twisting in and out in graceful curves until it disappeared in the far distance! It was really worth the climb, and I sat down to lunch, breathless, but happy at having got the hard work of the day over.

While at lunch I heard a shouting, and looking round saw Thomas grabbing a man by his cloth. I asked what was the matter, and Thomas said he had caught the man preparing to slide down the mountain-side and desert. As he was the tent-carrier Thomas opined that it was necessary to give him a good beating to bring him to his senses; but as the wretch promised not to desert again I let him off the beating this time, and soon afterwards we started to descend the other side of the mountain.

When we had got about half-way down a native rushed up to Thomas and began talking rapidly. He had come to tell us that at the next camp there was a white man waiting with thirty soldiers as escort for me. This surprised me very much, for I had sent on no message about my arrival. We went on, and then Thomas came to me and said, "Please kill meat, Missisi." I turned aside from the path with him, and we had not gone far before I saw the horns of a lesser hartebeeste. I fired and hit the animal, for we saw it go off on three legs, so the tracker, Thomas, and I dashed after it for dear life. After going a short distance, it halted near a tree, and, kneeling down, I had another shot; but away it went once more, with us after it. After following it through the long grass for a time, we came upon it again, and this time I took very careful aim before pulling. Even

View from top of Mount Camaneola.

so, I had to put another bullet into the brain at close quarters to finish it off.

Then I found that it was a female with horns, which surprised me greatly, for it was the first time I had seen such a thing. I left the boys to cut it up, and went further into the bush with Thomas, when, to my horror, I saw the male with a young one looking in our direction. I was very much disgusted at having killed the mother, but seeing her horns had made me feel sure that she was a male.

We returned to our path and continued the descent. When we reached the bottom of the mountain we had to go up over a small hill before entering camp, and as we approached the brow I saw a white man with soldiers waiting for us.

I asked him how in the world he had heard of my coming, and he told me that a week before a native had come into Nya Lukemba, and had told the Chef de Secteur that there was a white lady lying very ill at Luvungi. Several days later another native had come in to say that the white lady was much better, because he had seen her sitting in front of her house, shooting crows.

On hearing this the Chef de Secteur had sent out the escort to await my arrival, and they had been awaiting me here for three days.

That evening Thomas cooked a nice little dinner for the officer and myself, and I promised to be ready at about 4 a.m. next morning to start for Nya Lukemba. Just as I was getting into bed that night a terrific thunderstorm broke, with torrents of rain, but Thomas had made the usual trench round my tent, so I suffered no incon-

venience, and actually slept through it all till morning.

At 4.30 we started for Nya Lukemba, on Lake Kivu, which was a six hours' march from the camp. I was very tired, and the officer suggested he should have a machila made, so that I could be carried to the post, to which I gratefully agreed. The march passed without incident, and on arriving at the post I was met by the Chef de Secteur, Lieutenant Delattre.

The post was a peculiar mixture of desolation and beauty. No bush and no trees surrounded it, only bare mountains which gave a dreary air to that part of the landscape. But the post overlooked Lake Kivu, and the beauty of the lake made up for all the dreariness of the country beyond, as I think my photographs will show.

Lieutenant Delattre was a very charming young man, and I was greatly surprised, when he conducted me to the guest-house, to find that every preparation had been made for an honoured guest. Unlike my quarters at any other post, this house had been decorated, and tastefully decorated, for my especial benefit. There were gold and white curtains, behind which I could hang my dresses. On the dressing-table was every toilet requisite the heart of woman could desire. Over the windows were red and gold curtains. In fact, it was like entering a small palace after the quarters to which I had become accustomed.

Breakfast consisted of coffee, poached eggs on toast, and fresh strawberries, and after the meal my host said, "Madame would like to rest till lunch. My boy has hot water ready for a bath."

I went to bathe, and found a hot bath in which eau-de-Cologne had been sprinkled.

At luncheon I asked him who had arranged my room, and, getting very red in the face, he replied, "I did, madame." He had, it appeared, kept the natives working two days to get the room ready, and had just managed to complete his preparations in time for my arrival.

The next day was Sunday, and I accompanied my host round the post and saw the cultivation of fruits and also many Ancona cattle. I asked him to take me out next day so that I could get some photographs, and he promised to do so. Then I asked when I could start for Bobandana, and he replied, "The boat will be in on Tuesday morning, and you can leave at noon."

After luncheon we sat outside the mess-house, and Thomas made some excellent coffee. When he produced the brandy a sigh of surprise and contentment went up from the three officials, and, looking round, I saw them caressing the bottle with loving fingers. Brandy had not been seen in that district for many months, and the very fact that they could gaze upon a bottle of the genuine liquor afforded them almost as much satisfaction as being able to taste it once again.

While we were drinking the Chef de Secteur gave some instructions to his boy, and in about ten minutes I was surprised to see a number of natives coming towards us with bounds and leaps, a handkerchief and a string of beads making up their costume.

When they reached us they all halted, and in breathless fashion started to sing in French "Viens

Papoule," "Viens Papoule." When this very classical song was finished they did one of the weirdest dances it has ever been my lot to behold. First they stood in lines, and then, with a blood-curdling yell, which nearly knocked me out of my chair, flew at each other—but only to exchange spears as they formed a ring. Then, with another yell, they got mixed up on the ground so that you could not tell "t'other from which," and during this catch-as-catch-can performance several of them lost the little clothing they possessed. Then, at a clapping of hands from the officials, they stopped struggling, and stood erect, their loss of clothing causing them no kind of annoyance or embarrassment. They were absolutely dignified, and simply removed the beads from their necks and tied them round their waists!

This manœuvre was too much for my sense of humour, and I collapsed altogether, laughing until I thought my last hour had come. When my merriment had somewhat abated they began to make the usual inquiries as to why a white woman should be travelling alone through their country; and while this interesting conversation was going on the chief strolled up, dressed in a smile and a string of beads, with a man fore and aft holding a large cotton umbrella over his august head, which, I should add, was adorned with a cotton hat.

When he reached us he squatted down in front of me, then, without removing his hat, turned to the Chef de Secteur and asked how many husbands I had. When he was informed that I did not possess even one, he shook his head very solemnly and, I

Men and women dancing at Bobandana.

Natives bringing in bamboo, rubber, etc., for trading purposes.

am sorry to say, sceptically, and remarked, "Well, the Bwanas have no wives, so why do you not make her remain here with you?"

At this point I suggested a stroll round the post, so, with much clapping of hands, the whole crowd got up, and, forming into pairs behind their chief, danced themselves out of sight.

We started to stroll along the road, but had not gone far when we heard a tremendous singing in the distance, which gradually drew nearer and nearer, and presently from two hundred to three hundred natives hove in sight, some carrying long bamboo poles, some ivory, some maize and manioca. There was neither soldier, capito, nor white man with them, and they danced into the post as though they did not know they were in a country where "forced labour" is supposed to stretch horrid tentacles through seas of native gore!

When the Chef de Secteur held up his hand there was dead silence instantly, and all squatted on the ground, laying down their loads before them. Then we walked from one end of the line to the other, the bamboo, ivory, &c., being examined by the official. After the inspection was over they all got up and followed us to the Magazine, where they were paid in whatever medium they chose, either money, beads, coffee, wire, salt, rugs, cloths, or blankets. I waited and watched to see if any were dissatisfied, but there was not a single murmur.

One man, however, presently came up to the official, and a long conversation ensued. I could see that he was demanding something, which was refused, and with what patience the official listened to him, but always quietly giving the same answer.

Then, at a word, they all arose, and, with a great shout, moved off, and were soon out of sight.

I asked the official what the man had wanted, and he told me the chief of the man's village was then in prison, for having refused to allow his people to bring in bamboo, which was wanted for building purposes. For this he had been arrested, and as soon as this was done the villagers brought in not only bamboo, but maize and manioca as well.

The remainder of the day passed off peaceably and without incident, and I went to bed fairly early and fell asleep. I was roused from my slumbers by the sound of several shots, and wondered what was happening, but did not think it worth while to get up and see. In the morning, however, I made inquiries, and was told that there had been an attempt to rescue the chief from prison. His men had come up on the lake behind the prison building and began to scale the wall; but their efforts disturbed the sentry, who let off his rifle. No one was killed, no one was captured, and the chief was not rescued, so it was a case of "As you were."

After breakfast Lieutenant Delattre took me along the shores of the lake so that I might obtain a photograph of the cattle, and the result of my effort was, I think, one of the best pictures taken during this trip. I took other pictures besides that of the cattle and lake, but just as I had taken this last one a deadly chill came over me, and I sank down on the grass, my heart thumping.

My host helped me back to the house, where I fell on to the bed, shivering all over. He called Thomas and his own boy, and between them they tried to make me as comfortable as possible. They

A lovely view on Lake Kivu, with Ancona cattle in foreground.

put hot bricks at my feet and back, and wrapped me up in no fewer than twenty blankets; but even so, it was over an hour before the shivering fit stopped. I then took my temperature, and was horrified to find it 106, so I knew I must be in for another dose of fever. I told my host what to do if I became delirious, and then everything began to grow dim, and soon I knew no more.

For several days I was delirious, and when at last I did recover consciousness my first words were, "When does the boat leave?" To which I received the reply, "You must wait another week for the boat to return, as it left here last Tuesday."

Thomas told me that Lieutenant Delattre had scarcely left my room all the time I was ill. "He only left Missisi to take bath and change clothes. His table and papers he brought in and worked here. If Missisi move he come in quick. Once Bwana and Thomas hold Missisi down, because she want to throw herself on floor, and want to leave for Mombasa quickly. Then she threw off her rings. She make good fight, but we hold her down. I hold Missisi so tight she have black mark on her arms!" And looking down, I saw their finger-prints on my arms.

When I was strong enough, I asked for a looking-glass, and nearly fell out of bed at my strange appearance. I not only looked like one risen from the dead, but over my left temple one lock of my hair had turned quite white!

Thomas also informed me that I was always hitting my head against the corner of the table or the post of the iron bedstead, and, in fact, generally

making things difficult for my two nurses. A nice patient I must have been!

The first day I was up one of the officials brought me a small monkey. He had had it about a week, and assured me that it was quite tame; so, believing him, I took the little beast in my arms, and she promptly bit me on the shoulder. I let her go, with a shriek, and she flew back to him, and began chattering and gibbering at me in a very unfriendly way. So when the pain had gone I grabbed her again, holding her firmly under the chin; then I talked to her like a mother, and after a time she became quite calm and friendly. I chained her to the door-post, but during the night she bit through her girdle, and next morning I found her in my bed when I awoke. From that day to the time I brought her to England she never tried to bite me again, but woe to the unwary stranger who came too near me when she was in my arms!

Before leaving here I was also given two other very rare monkeys and a grey parrot, which I soon taught to speak French. Her education was completed by the porters, who taught her Swahili, but I am afraid the expressions they taught her were not strictly parliamentary, as whenever she spoke in their tongue one and all would go off into shrieks of laughter.

Of course Lieutenant Delattre was keen on getting Thomas as his servant, and one day, in order to test the boy, I asked the young officer to offer him big wages if he would leave my service and stay at Nya Lukemba.

I sent Thomas to cook luncheon for the officials that day, while I had my lunch alone. After

the meal was over Thomas came back to me and said—

"I thought I liked the Bwana, but I don't. He no gentleman. He offer me much money to stay here. I say, Think you very kind gentleman, but what will Missisi do if Thomas go? Missisi not very strong, and I think she would die without Thomas. If Bwana can find some one else Missisi would like as much as Thomas, and Missisi tell Thomas to stay here, Thomas will stay; but do not think Missisi would like any one as much as Thomas."

Needless to say, everything possible was done for my comfort during my convalescence at Nya Lukemba, and when it came to the time for my departure I was sorry to leave a place where I had met with so much thoughtful kindness. The Lieutenant had asked Thomas what provisions I was short of, and whatever Thomas said I needed he supplied. He also gave me a case of burgundy, but would not hear of my paying for any of these things. "Madame," he said, "I consider it an honour to help you to finish your journey in more comfort."

I now had to go on board a small native boat, by which I was to travel to Bobandana, a four days' cruise. I did not sleep on board, but went ashore each evening and had my tent pitched in front of the guest-house at each post, where I found strawberries and vegetables growing in great abundance.

On the second day we put into a little bay, so that Thomas could heat up the Irish stew, made the night before. He did so, and then handed the saucepan up to the porters in the boat, and they

promptly let it drop, spilling all the meat into the bottom of the boat, where they then proceeded to scramble for it. Several of them did, however, have the courtesy to offer me large pieces of meat and potatoes which they had picked up from the dirty boards; and when I refused they looked at me as though I had taken leave of my senses, to refuse meat!!!

The same afternoon a terrible storm suddenly descended upon us, and the boat was quickly surrounded by foam-topped waves, which set us pitching horribly. The natives were very frightened; so was my "Zoo." Polly, who had been sitting on the back of my chair, gave a scream, climbed over my shoulder, and snuggled down inside my coat, while the monkeys tried to get inside the rug.

The boat was not very seaworthy, and I wondered every moment whether we should live to get ashore. I said, "Thomas, if boat go, I cannot swim." Thomas replied reassuringly, "All right, Missisi, do not be frightened. Thomas can swim!" However, we reached the shore in safety, although, of course, everything on board was dripping wet, including my clothes!

When the rain stopped we started again, and I felt better after having some tea, with brandy in it, which Thomas prepared for me. The lake was now smooth again, and we arrived in camp at 10.30 that night. Here, as usual, there were strawberries, strawberries growing out in the open air in October, and they call it the cold season. "Oh, ye people in England," I thought, "would you not envy me, if you knew!"

I slept in the guest-house that night, and next

THE BOAT IN WHICH MRS. ROBY TRAVELLED FOR FOUR DAYS ON LAKE KIVU.

LEAVING LUVUNGI.

day accomplished the remainder of my journey to Bobandana without further adventure. I was met by the officials, but the guest-house was too cold, so the Chef de Secteur lent me his house, and here I went down once more before my old enemy the fever. It was not a very bad dose this time, but it kept me in bed for two or three days, during part of which time I was unconscious.

While I was thus laid up, a great chieftainess heard that there was a white woman at the post, so came in and asked if she might look at me. I was unconscious at the time, but they allowed her to have a peep at me, and she went away, highly gratified.

When I was better and able to sit up, she came in again, this time in full regalia, and presented me with a magnificent ivory bracelet and a beaded head-dress. After fingering my hair, which (like Flo's) was hanging down my back, she asked why white men advised black women to keep their hair cut close, and yet allowed their own women to grow it long. She greatly admired my skin and hair, and asked several questions which were very embarrassing to the Chef de Secteur and myself. However, we managed to get through safely in the end.

She was a very handsome woman, but what puzzled me was that, although her face and shoulders were very slender, the rest of her body appeared to be very big. So in the end I got her to retire with me and take off her cloth, when I found that she had between £50 and £60 worth of copper wire wound round her body! This, of course, represented her wealth, but it must have been a very uncomfortable way of carrying one's riches.

Next day she came in once more with all the men and women from her village to dance before me. The performance was very wild, but the dancers were quite up-to-date, being "clothed" chiefly in beads, which they wore round their heads, necks, arms, and ankles. In fact, I firmly believe that the Classical Dance, as practised in Central Africa, would make a great "hit" on the London "classical" stage.

After the dance I gave the chieftainess a box of beads to distribute amongst her people, and as I felt sure that I would look rather nice in similar costume, the Chef de Secteur gave *me* a box, telling me that I could decorate myself *en route;* but, alas! other matters drove the idea from my head, and my *début* as a bead-dancer has yet to be made.

It was at Bobandana that I had my first attack of jiggers. This has nothing to do with strong waters, though I admit it sounds alcoholic, but consists of a small black insect which makes itself comfy under your toenails. I looked at my feet one morning, and thought they were dirty, but on summoning Thomas, he said, "Oh, Missisi, jiggers!" and, grabbing my foot and a pen-knife, he soon had them out.

Harking back for a moment to the chieftainess, let me here say that this woman owns thousands of acres of land, and has between 3,000 and 4,000 head of cattle. From Bobandana to Rucheru my porters were supplied by her from her village.

I was now fit again, and was beginning to think of continuing my journey, when one day a chief came in with one of those pieces of news which make one realise that Central Africa is still "Darkest Africa" to this day.

His news was to the effect that a certain chief, named Nalimlo, had just made a raid upon five villages. These he had burned down, and then he and his men had captured every man, woman, and child on whom they could lay hands, twenty-six in all, every one of whom they had *killed and eaten!*

On learning these tidings it was, of course, the Chef de Secteur's duty to organise a small punitive expedition, proceed to the cannibal chief's village, and bring the man to justice. This was something quite out of the beaten track in the way of travelling experiences, so I quickly made up my mind to go with them and see the fun, as the possibility of being in a real battle was not one to be cast lightly aside—especially in the Congo of all places, where blood is supposed to flow like water!

The Chef de Secteur chose about thirty soldiers for the expedition, and I set out with them, not forgetting to take Thomas and my kitchen, for Nalimlo's village was three days' march distant from Bobandana.

We set forth without any fuss, and I could not help thinking that war in the wilds is not half so picturesque a thing as war at home, where there are always plenty of people to see the troops off, and cheer frantically as they march away.

Well, away we marched through the bush, and on and on, without any kind of adventure, either by day or by night. For three days we marched thus, visiting *en route* the destroyed villages to prove the truth of the report we had received, and never saw a sign of the cannibal chief—no, not even when we at length approached his village.

But although we could not see any sign of Nalimlo, it was sufficiently obvious that Nalimlo had heard of our advance, and was prepared for our onslaught upon his village.

Yes, for there, all round his village was a formidable bamboo palissade, strong and high and carefully constructed. First of all a single bamboo pole had been driven into the ground, then two other poles, driven in at an angle from either side, so as to form an X, strengthening the original pole, which touched the other two at the joining of the X. At this juncture all three poles had been securely bound together with grass. Then other poles had been bound in a horizontal position to the original three poles, until the whole formed a high and stout wall right round the village, which, I may say, was quite a big one.

These preparations to keep us out seemed to promise quite a lively time presently, when the battle began, and I prepared to make mental notes of my impressions and sensations under a hail of hostile spears; whether their effect was similar to that made by bullets; how savage warfare differed from "civilised" fighting, &c., &c., &c. It was, in fact, a moment to stir the latent instincts of the war correspondent, and I fancied myself back in Manchuria as I waited for the advance to be sounded.

On going into battle one is supposed to entertain somewhat lofty thoughts, I believe; but, to be strictly truthful, on this occasion my anxieties were of a somewhat prosaic order.

The fact remains that one must eat to live, and as fighting is hungry work, it is just as well to make arrangements, when you can, for a good meal after-

wards. If you are killed there are sure to be survivors, who will be able to appreciate your efforts; and if you survive—well, you will probably be in just the mood for a jolly good meal.

At any rate, so it seemed to me, and therefore, before our army advanced upon the enemy's stronghold, I set Thomas to work in the kitchen, preparing dinner against my contemplated return. I chose a spot out of spear range from the firing line, of course, for soldiers can be trained, but cooks are born. Then, leaving him to his labours, I turned my face to the foe, and presently we were advancing in open order upon the bamboo zareba.

The village stood on the midst of a clearing in the bush, and the ground over which we were now advancing was level, with no cover. On the other hand, it occurred to me that it had been a tactical mistake on Nalimlo's part to build such a very high and very thick palissade, because, after all, it is as well to see your foe if you want to hit him, and no one standing behind the bamboo wall could hope to see much of us, and even if they caught a glimpse of us they could not throw their spears *through* the fence, it was too closely knit together.

We approached the doomed village without any casualties, and in due course arrived outside the zareba, behind which we could hear the movements of Nalimlo's warriors, but no spears came sailing over on to our devoted heads, so I supposed the slaughter would begin when we arrived inside. We were right in under the bamboo wall now, and, looking at our gallant commander, I noticed that he was giving orders to his men to fire. The battle was really about to begin at last!

CHAPTER X

THE BATTLE OF NALIMLO, AND THE LAVA FOREST

AT the word of command our men raised their rifles heavenwards and fired a volley. As they did so there was a sound of pattering feet from the other side of the zareba, which gradually died away as the gallant defenders took to their heels, seeking safety in flight. We then fell upon the bamboo wall with great ferocity, and began to hack our way through it. This was quite a big job, for it was very well put together, but we stuck to our task with indomitable pluck, cutting the grass bindings and wrenching the poles away, until at last we could see daylight on the other side. A little more work, and then we had a breach made, through which we hurled ourselves with a shout. The outer fortifications were won!

We were not yet in the village, however; on the contrary, we found ourselves confronted by a second wall, higher and stronger than the first. Up to this we marched, and again our deadly rifle fire (from weapons held at an angle of 45 degrees) sent the dauntless foe scuttling before us, and left us free to devote all our energies to the destruction of their second line of defence. It would ill become me to dilate upon the prodigies of valour that we performed

before that second wall. Suffice it to say that once more a breach was made, and once more we poured through to victory.

The third wall, which now towered up before us, was higher than either of the former, but we were warming to our work by this time, and, without a moment's hesitation, we put the foe to flight for the third time by means of a well-directed volley, aimed somewhere in the direction of the sun. Then we fell upon the wall and demolished it—or at least part of it.

I really expected to find myself in the village after we had penetrated that third zareba, but, if you will believe me, the enemy had built up no fewer than five of these bamboo fences round the village, through each of which we had to carve a pathway. Then, at last, we really did find ourselves in the village itself, and, for the first time since the beginning of the battle, we caught a glimpse of our terrible foes.

It was only a fleeting glimpse, I must confess that, for, to tell the truth, we only saw their backs as they ran for all they were worth out through the outer end of the village. We gave chase at the to of our speed, and soon saw Nalimlo and some of his headmen running away at a pace which showed that the fatigue of fighting had not made any impression upon their winds. In fact, they looked like leaving us far behind, unless we did something to stop them. A halt was therefore called, and for the sixth time that day we took a pot-shot at the nearest clouds overhead; and as the rifles spoke Nalimlo and his followers came to a standstill, and swung round to face us.

The chief had been flinging off his bracelets as he ran, recognising that the end was near. (I picked up one of them, made of ivory, and wear it at the present time in memory of the battle.) He stood, crouching behind his big shield, as we approached him, and I took a photograph of him thus, when we had got within "snapping" distance. I thought that perhaps he might hurl his spear at us, and make a sporting stand before being captured; but he did not do so, evidently knowing the power of the rifle. He was taken into custody, and sent to Kasonga to take his trial.

So ended this great and fearful battle of spears and guns, in which the casualties were exactly *nil*, and as we returned, hungry and victorious, to dinner, I could not help wishing that some of the Congo alarmist-sentimental-atrocity writers had been present. They could have made such a fine thing out of it in cold print—blood, smoke, and severed hands and feet flying in all directions, *et cetera, et cetera!* The explanation? . Oh, that is quite simple. According to the Belgian custom in such circumstances the soldiers had received instructions beforehand to hurt no one and to shoot *into the air!*

Well, having seen the fun, we returned to Bobandana. I now felt at liberty to resume my journey. I bought two live sheep for a couple of francs each, and the Chef de Secteur gave me a number of beautiful otter skins. Then I set out for the great Lava Forest.

My route lay on the edge of the lake, then across the water to the foot of the forest. Before reaching the lake, I stopped at a rifle range to watch the native soldiers firing. At 200 yards three out of

twelve men hit the bull's-eye nine times out of twelve, which I thought was not bad shooting for the wild black.

All my porters and luggage were at the edge of the lake when I arrived, also two small native boats in which I was to cross to the other side. Of course we could not possibly all go over at the same time, so Thomas and I, with the parrot and monkeys, got into one boat, and the kitchen, tent, chairs, and half a dozen porters were huddled into the other. When we had crossed, the boats were to return for the remaining porters and luggage.

Before setting out, I told the capito to come across as quickly as possible, for I wanted to do a short march into the forest that afternoon, but I might have saved my breath. We landed on the other side at 11.30 a.m., and at once sent the boats back, but not until 6 p.m. did the rest of the caravan show up. As it had taken us only one hour to cross, I asked the capito what on earth he had been doing, to which he replied that they had delayed coming because the porters wanted to make sandals to protect their feet through the forest, where, he explained, the lava cut like knives through the flesh of those who had no shoes. He added that if any men fell ill in the forest it would be impossible to replace them, so, swallowing my anger, I made the best of a bad job. I told him to kill a sheep and distribute it amongst the men for supper, and that we would start before sunrise in the morning.

After dinner I turned in, but had not been asleep long when I awoke, feeling as though I were in a refrigerator. It was cold! I called to Thomas for a

cup of cocoa and some more rugs, and was soon again in the arms of Morpheus, where I remained until Thomas called me with my coffee in the morning.

All the porters, except those needed for my tent, had already started, and I was soon dressed and ready to follow them. Then I entered the Lava Forest.

I have been all over the world, and through very many forests in South America and other wild regions, but never have I seen anything to approach this wonderful and unique Lava Forest of Central Africa.

As I entered I looked back at the wonderful landscape which I was leaving behind. There, on my left, stretched a magnificent chain of nine volcanic mountains, one of which—the largest—is always burning. Even then, in the early morning, I could see great clouds of smoke forcing their way up through the soft white mists of morning that still draped its rugged peak. Behind me lay the lake, and in the centre a large island, to which the capito pointed, explaining that it was covered with silk cocoons. I heard afterwards that the Belgians intend to start a silk industry there.

After gazing at lake, island, and mountains for some time I turned and entered the forest by means of a very narrow path which had apparently been trodden but seldom. Oh, the first two hours' march through the forest, shall I ever forget it! Up and up we went, the sharp edges of the lava points, upon which we had to walk, cutting up through the soles of my boots until I felt that my feet were on fire. I forgot the cold in this new pain, and presently

forgot that, when we emerged from the path on to what looked like a Transformation scene at a Drury Lane pantomime. I stood and gasped in astonishment as I stood there on the edge of an immense clearing, covered with a carpet of soft green moss, from which tiny red flowers peeped out, like bunches of coral. There were other flowers as well, mauve and pink and blue, dotting the ground with splashes of dainty colour, and sheltered from the frost by delicate, spreading ferns that stood above them like little parasols. Then, shooting up higher still, was green bracken, round which more brilliant flowers twined themselves, and not a sign of the cruel lava that lay stretched out for miles and miles underneath all this luxuriant vegetation.

Before me stretched a long avenue of trees, leading away into the depths of the forest, as far as I could see. Beautiful flowering creepers spread from tree to tree, and long feathery ferns, like exquisite pale-green ostrich feathers, hung overhead, roofing in the fairy avenue down which I gazed in fascinated wonder.

While I still stood there, the sun rose up and a fresh note of colour crept over the scene. The frost began to melt, and everything was tipped with glittering diamond drops where the shafts of sunlight struck down, here and there, through the overhanging trees.

How I wished I could take a photograph, but it was much too dark; and besides, what photograph could show the wonderful flowers, the dewdrops, and the silver frost? While I still stood there, unable to tear myself away from the enchanting beauty of the scene, Thomas touched me on the

arm and said, "Please come, Missisi. Long way to go! This very pretty, better than Rhodesia, but capito says much more flowers to-morrow."

So I pulled myself together, and on we went, always going up and up through the wonderful wild growth of the silent forest, where neither bird nor insect disturbed the stillness. Sometimes the undergrowth was so thick that the men had to cut out a path for me, and everywhere was bracken, through which I had to keep pushing my way until I was quite tired. Often I would get caught round the body by some great creeper, which Thomas had to cut away before I could resume my climb. And still up and up we went, on a hill that seemed to have no end.

For five solid hours we climbed, without seeing a sign of animal or bird life, and then we reached a big clearing, where I found the porters waiting, with my tent up and a fire burning merrily. I was not sorry to have a cup of tea, and while drinking it I happened to look up, and there, towering over the tops of the trees, I saw the snow-capped summit of Ruwenzori, apparently not more than a mile away, but, in reality, very many miles beyond the forest. I waited for over an hour for the clouds to rise from its peak, and at last they did so. The view well repaid me for my patience.

The hard day's march must, I suppose, have told upon Thomas's toes, or nerves; at any rate, for the first time since we had been together, he spoilt my dinner that evening. Then I told him to make some cakes, and these also he spoilt.

When I asked him for an explanation, he said "Very sorry, Missisi, but there are so many damned

devils in the woods! Everything cooking nice, I turn my back for one minute to find something. Hear smell, and damned thing burnt!"

There is nothing like having an explanation for things.

I got at the true explanation later, and it was that he was anxious about our water-supply. We had to carry water for a four days' march, and I think he had found out that the men had been tapping our bottles *en route*. Anyhow, the water-carriers walked with us after that first day, and I had no more trouble about the cooking.

Our second day in the forest was similar to the first. We passed some trees with wonderful foliage —copper beeches, bamboos, firs, and monkey-trees. The path was still very narrow, and it was difficult to walk with any degree of safety, owing to the deep ravines which one would unexpectedly come upon. During the day I wanted to make some soup, but Thomas said, "Oh, Missisi, mustn't be careless with water! If you fall ill, will want drink, drink, drink. I take away now!" And he carted the bottle away, and I had to go without my soup. That night there was a heavy frost, and all our water was frozen in the morning!

During the third day's march we came upon the skeleton of an elephant, which had evidently been wounded, and had wandered off into the forest to die. Then, leaving the forest behind us, we emerged on to the great Lava Plain.

On reaching camp, I took my glasses and looked across the plain. I saw water, and asked what it was. One of the porters told Thomas that it was a lake with plenty of fish in it, and that, if I liked, he

would go and get some. I consented, although I was rather sceptical about the fish. However, at five o'clock next morning back he came again, bringing some trout with him. I determined to take a photo of the Fish Lake before going further, and waited for the sun to rise, when I got a very good snap of it. This picture also gives a good idea of the great Lava Plain, where, unlike the forest, there is no growth of any kind.

The fourth days' march took us through a lovely green forest, full of magnificent palms, and also boasting a superb waterfall and "devil's dyke," where the water fell into a pool about twenty feet down, boiling up to the surface again in a mass of white foam. We were now nearing Rucheru, so Thomas changed his clothes for those I had bought him at Ujiji, and appeared looking quite a swell compared to his dirty tramp of a mistress!

Before reaching Rucheru I sat down to have a cigarette, and while smoking saw Thomas gazing at me as though his eyes would fall out of his head, with a look of horror on his face. Much alarmed, I asked him what was the matter, but he only pointed behind me; so up I jumped and grabbed my gun, expecting to find at least a lion or leopard at my back. I saw neither, but there, with its tail turned well over its back in the act of striking, was a great scorpion. I had only just got up in time! It did not take me long to put an end to its existence, when Thomas, picking up the tail, turned to me and said, "Condo!" meaning that if the reptile had struck, it would have been death for me. Then we continued our journey to Rucheru.

On entering the post I was met by Lieutenant

Raemdonck and the Chef de Poste, both very pleasant men, who told me that a house was ready for me, and that as soon as I had changed, luncheon would be served at the Lieutenant's house, which was just round the corner. While we were talking another European walked up and introduced himself to me. At first I thought he was a harmless lunatic, but upon inquiring as to his identity, I was informed that he was "Monsieur Le Substitut," and this was the only name I ever knew him by. He was taking the place of the magistrate in that district, for the time being, and one glance at him made me fear he was a victim to morphia.

After changing my dress, I walked round to my host's house, where I found a delightful luncheon awaiting me, and, for the first time during my trek, exquisite table linen. They had already lunched, and I think I rather surprised them by eating a meal which would have done credit to the healthiest person, let alone the sick woman they had expected to see.

That evening I was invited to the mess for dinner. We had just sat down when we heard a terrific roaring, and a couple of lions walked past the house, not more than thirty yards from where we were sitting, which made me leap from my chair and rush to the door, crying, "Lions!" "Yes," said the Chef de Poste, "but you must not go and interfere with our 'Charlies.' Every evening they pass the house on their way to the water to drink." "But do you not shoot them?" I asked. "Oh, no, they are quite playful, and we never touch them," he replied. "At the same time, I must admit that no one goes out after sundown without an escort of soldiers with

loaded rifles." Thus reassured, I sat down again and tried to accustom myself to the strange sight of several lions padding calmly past the house, as though they had been sheep or cattle going down for their evening drink.

As the officials here did no shooting, and game appeared to be plentiful in the bush around, it seemed a good opportunity to go out and try my luck. Accordingly, next day I went off to see what I could pick up in the way of game, taking my Enfield but no boys with me. I left the post and walked steadily forward through the bush for about half an hour. Then I suddenly sighted a herd of antelope, so, kneeling down, I picked out one of the larger ones, and took aim. I had discovered that by kneeling down and resting an elbow on one knee I shot much better than in any other position, and the present occasion proved to be no exception to this rule, for, on pulling the trigger, I had the satisfaction of seeing my antelope fall like a log. On running up to where it lay I found that I had shot a roan, which was quite dead, the bullet having passed clean through the shoulder and lungs. Highly pleased, I returned to the post, and they sent out half a dozen men to bring the meat in.

That evening Monsieur Le Substitut was very amusing at dinner by reason of his efforts with the English language, which he had by no means mastered. His intentions were excellent, the object of his efforts being to pay me some elegant compliments, but the result was not all that he could have desired, for he convulsed me with merriment.

"Oh, madame, you are indeed a great and fearful woman to travel alone with the blacks!" was one of

his efforts at gallantry. And, talking of the roan which I had shot that day, he asked, "Were you not frightened to be lost in the densely cultivated bush this morning?" But just as he showed every promise of surpassing himself an interruption occurred which put an end to his efforts, and threw the whole table into confusion. A couple of dogs were playing just outside the house, and now the most fearful howling began, upon which we one and all leapt from our seats and rushed out to see what was the matter.

We found that one of the dogs, which belonged to M. Le Substitut, had fallen upon a piece of broken glass and cut some artery in the leg. I tried to do something for the poor beast, but all my efforts were vain, and in the end it had to be shot, much to M. Le Substitut's grief. We returned to dinner, Monsieur dissolved in tears, and the evening ended in tragedy.

Nothing of importance happened next day, but I invited the officials to dinner in the evening, and set Thomas on to demonstrate once more his extraordinary powers as a chef. The Lieutenant sent down to the lake for fresh fish, and our menu was—hors d'œuvres, soup, fish, lamb cutlets, roast chicken, omelette, French salad, and champagne cup, made by me, with coffee and liqueurs to follow. Once more Thomas surpassed himself, and the function was quite a success. M. Le Substitut was afflicted with a tremendous thirst, which I put down to the loss of his poor dog. He made gallant efforts to drive off the "drought," however, and when I met him again next morning I was scarcely surprised to hear him say that he had a bad headache.

I decided to leave Rucheru on the fourth day, *en route* for Vitshumbi, at the top of Lake George, or Lake Albert Edward, as it is sometimes called. The Chef de Poste supplied me with porters, and he and the Lieutenant vied with one another in giving me vegetables and other provisions, a couple of sheep figuring prominently on the list of their kind gifts.

M. Le Substitut, not to be outdone, went so far as to offer me his most treasured possession: to wit, a large and succulent ham, which was the height of unselfishness, considering that he simply loved it himself. Luckily I am not very fond of this delicacy, or I might have been tempted to accept his offer; as it was, I refused, whereupon he sent me three beautiful otter skins.

And so, well provided with porters and provisions, I set out on my four days' march from Rucheru to Vitshumbi. It was now the rainy season, and throughout this march the weather was extremely uncertain. Heavy showers continually overtook us, and then passed off, to be succeeded by intervals of bright sunshine. But I was thoroughly accustomed to getting wet through by this time, and, besides, the country through which I was now passing made me forget all about the vagaries of the weather.

First of all I went for miles and miles through a district that was thickly studded with splendid banana plantations. The mountains, too, were cultivated in terraces which rose above one another from base to summit. This reminded me of Japan, where the rice is cultivated in a similar way upon the mountain-sides.

At several villages where I stopped for a cup of

tea the natives brought me fresh vegetables—European potatoes, vegetable marrows, fresh ears of corn, cabbages, tomatoes, &c. On the second day I found myself on a plain that was literally alive with antelope and other game. In every direction there were herds of them, grazing for all the world as though they were in some private park or cattle ranch. I could scarcely believe my eyes at first; it was so difficult to imagine that all these thousands of creatures were really *wild* animals. But they were wild, only with the quiet assurance of wild creatures who knew but little of man and his deadly weapons.

Upon the third day walking became very difficult and tiring. The rains came down in torrents, and my gun-bearers had to go ahead and cut a path for me through the long undergrowth, which sometimes sprang up to a height of twenty feet. However, I kept on marching, and upon the fourth day entered a veritable sportsman's paradise, the like of which I have never seen or read about before or since.

Imagine an enormous plain, with thousands upon thousands of every kind of antelope—reed buck, bush buck, roans, and I know not what else. The whole place alive with them, flocks and herds of them in every direction I had only to take a few steps from the path, to right or left, and up they would spring, like rabbits, and go cantering off. If I had drawn a bead on one of them, and missed, my bullet would have almost certainly hit another! I could have looked over my left shoulder and fired to the right, and the chances are that I should most certainly have brought something down.

I was not out for mere slaughter, otherwise I could have made a colossal bag of buck on these marvellous plains without the slightest difficulty; in fact, the very simplicity of the task took all sporting flavour from such shooting, and I contented myself with a reed buck, which the porters were very glad to have. I think I hit the buck I aimed at, but nobody could miss on that plain, so I will not swear to it! The porters enjoyed their meat, and I had the kidneys and liver for breakfast. When fresh these are quite delicacies.

We now came to some extraordinary chalk and sulphur formations, in the shape of an enormous pit which stretched away, like the ruins of some mighty Roman arena. The dominant colours were green and white, with touches of turquoise blue. There were also terraces, cupolas, and broken columns, as though some vast ancient building had once stood on the spot. Lovely ferns and flowers sprouted everywhere and added greatly to the beauty of this weird scene.

Like other flowers in this strange country, these blossoms were of many colours, but had no stalks. Their heads stick out just above the ground, as though they had been gathered by a child and then pushed into the earth. They are very lovely, but have no scent, the Congo, as has been said, being a land of "flowers without scent and birds without song."

Leaving the strange "ruins" behind, we proceeded to climb over a hill, and, descending by a narrow path, reached a stone "square," for all the world like a paved stone square in London! From this hill I caught my first glimpse of some lakes, which

Buck shot en route to Vitshumbi.

The Cannibal Chief's last stand at the "battle of Nalimlo."

we presently approached. They were small stretches of water, and on one of them numbers of pelicans were swimming about, while on another I saw the beautiful aigrette bird disporting itself. Then on again we went, reaching camp at 4.30.

This was one of the largest camps that I had visited. It overlooked the lake, was very clean, and was surrounded by a very high bamboo palissade—the earth of the enclosure having been stamped down by natives until it was as hard as asphalte. In the centre a dining-room had been erected, to the right of this, under the palissade, was a larder for meat, and opposite a "luggage-room." Behind the dining-room was a kitchen, and behind that again a bath-room. There was also accommodation for porters inside the palissade. It was, in fact, an altogether up-to-date camp.

While Thomas was preparing my dinner I heard a great bellowing from the lake beyond, so took up my glasses and looked out over the water. I soon saw numbers of hippo rising to the surface of the lake to breathe, and I continued to watch them until I grew tired of holding up the glasses.

The chief of the village had come in to camp with his headmen, and had brought a good supply of banana branches, with the fruit on them, for the porters. They paid a halfpenny a bunch for the fruit. He also brought some fruit for me, but when I asked him for fresh water he swore that there was not any, although the mountains around seemed to belie his statement.

Thomas now brought me some tea, which he had made from the lake water; and although it did not taste very good, it at least quenched my thirst.

Then, after a short rest, I went off with my gun-bearer to get an antelope, if possible, for the villagers.

After a short walk we came upon a herd of eland, and, picking out my buck, I fired, and had the satisfaction of hearing the thud of the bullet on his body. He fell, but was up again in a moment and off like the wind on three legs, with us after him in the usual breakneck style. A breathless burst through the bush brought us within sight of him again, this time leaning up against a tree. I knelt down and gave him another bullet, when he fell, and I walked up to him and found that I had broken the right shoulder with the first shot, and that the second had gone right through the lungs.

I then returned to dinner, while both porters and villagers gave themselves up to great rejoicings on account of the meat which I had provided for them.

Before turning in that night I gave orders for a boat to be ready for my use next day, as I wanted to go out on the lake after a hippo, and also some birds. Then I went to bed, and was soon asleep, the night passing without interruption or adventure of any kind.

CHAPTER XI

MY BOATMEN MUTINY ON LAKE ALBERT EDWARD

I WAS up early next morning, feeling rather seedy and with a bad headache; but hoping that this would pass off in the excitement of the chase, I set out for the lake in search of the boat that I had ordered overnight.

When I reached the water's edge there was the boat, right out on the lake, and full of villagers busily engaged in fishing! They had not reckoned upon my being up and out so early, and had put off to have a bit of sport on their own before I turned up. We had to shout, and shout, and shout at them to come back, and even when we had attracted their attention, it took them an hour to bring her back to shore. While they crawled slowly back to land I watched numbers of pelicans swimming about, and presently I saw five of the famous pink-breasted pelican, a couple of which I determined to bag, if possible.

At last the boat fetched up, and a fine craft she was, too, with any number of holes in her, and a couple of natives bailing her out all the time! If they had stopped doing so for ten minutes we should have gone under!

There were any number of different birds all round the edge of the lake, and my plan was to move slowly round after them, picking up what I could as we went. The pink-breasted pelican must have guessed my intentions, for by the time I had got under weigh they were nowhere to be seen. However, I bagged a couple of hippo before I had been on the water half an hour. One I hit in the head, and he rolled over and over in the water for fully ten minutes before sinking. Then on I went after the birds again.

Next I got "right and left" at plantain birds; these are big and very beautiful creatures, their backs being peacock blue, their breasts green, and their bills red. They live on plantain bananas, hence their name.

A number of very beautiful birds now got up within shot, and, picking out two of the most finely plumaged, I let drive at them, and, to my amazement, brought down two others, *at which I had not aimed!* And I was supposed to be a good game shot in England!

Looking ahead, I now saw a great white line stretching right across the lake. I could not tell what it was at first, but as we drew nearer, saw that it was thousands of pelican. They did not get up at our approach, but just swam away, like ducks in a London park, easily within shot of me. Unfortunately, there was not a single pink-breasted bird amongst them.

The next addition to my bag was four aigrettes and three marabout. The latter bird differs greatly from the East African marabout, which is blue-grey, except for the white marabout feathers under the tail;

WILD PIG, DAIKAR AND AIGRETTE SHOT ON LAKE GEORGE.

HAWK; WITH MONKEY AND PARROT IN BACKGROUND.

while the birds I shot that day had beautiful underwing plumage and white breast feathers.

I had been out for some hours, and the sun was very hot by now, while my head, instead of getting better, was simply splitting. I therefore turned back for camp, and on the way passed the two hippo floating on the lake not a dozen yards from where I had shot them. I gave orders for the teeth to be cut out, and several chicottes to be made from strips of the hide. But hippo teeth and everything else was forgotten in another attack of fever which seized me soon after getting back to my tent. This, I felt sure, was partly through my having drank the lake water on my arrival, and when Thomas told me that there was plenty of fresh water only half an hour from camp, but the chief had been too lazy to send for it, I was really angry. I had the man brought in, and then and there Thomas gave him twenty good strokes with the chicotte, which he thoroughly deserved. Indeed, if I had not felt so ill, he should have had more.

Then I sent a courier down to Kassendi, asking the official to send up the doctor, and afterwards crawled into bed. Late that night I had an awful shivering fit, and brought up a lot of blood. These and other symptoms led me to think that I had a dose of blackwater fever, in which case I knew it would probably be a case of goodbye.

For three days and nights I remember nothing; but on the third night I became conscious, and, looking round, saw in one corner of the tent Thomas, his chin resting on his hands, and elbows on knees, with what looked like tears on his cheeks. Near him was my electric torch, and round the bed a

veritable refreshment department—tea, coffee, cocoa, claret, soda-water, champagne—in fact, everything drinkable I carried. It really was a quaint sight, and, weak as I was, I had to laugh.

"Thomas, what is the matter?" I asked.

"Oh, Missisi," he answered, "Thomas heart very sad all the time Missisi sick. Now she talk, now she quiet, and Thomas frightened. These black devils here very bad, and Thomas always sit outside tent with gun at night till all go away. Then come in here. If Missisi die and Thomas alone, Thomas can't put Missisi plenty under ground, as he promised. What shall Thomas do?"

"Make me a cup of tea," I replied, "and after to-morrow we go down the lake to where white men are. Missisi going to get well again."

"What, after spit so much blood?" he asked.

"Yes," I assured him, "that was nothing."

The following night I was a little better, and was able to hear the lions roaring as I lay awake in bed. I sent word to the chief to have two boats ready a couple of days later to take me to Kassendi, also men to row them. I had paid off all my porters and sent them back to Rucheru, so that Thomas and I were now quite alone. I had, however, been told that a large iron boat would be at my disposal here; but it had not turned up, and I was determined to wait no longer for it.

I found the two boats ready at the appointed time, but the rowers were an ill-conditioned, sulky-looking lot, and I had trouble with them from the very first. They wanted me to leave my luggage behind, to be called for by the iron boat; but I had not the slightest intention of being so silly, and

ordered them to carry it on board. They refused to do so, and I got out my chicotte and put the argument to them in a form which they could understand—and feel! They then sulkily consented to carry the things on board one boat, which was to be towed by the other in which we were to travel.

At last we started, one man being put on to bail out the water which came in freely through various holes. It seemed odds against our ever reaching our destination, but "nothing venture nothing gain," and I hoped for the best. We were supposed to reach camp by noon, but it remained a sweet supposition, and by 4 p.m. we were still miles and miles away from our destination.

The infernal natives seemed to think they were out for a holiday cruise, and work they would not. There was no end to the "rests" they had. Now they would stop rowing and have a talk, now they would want something to eat, now they would be just tired and take a rest! So the time dragged by, until about five o'clock some of them pointed to a little islet and said, "Plenty meat."

Heaven knows they did not deserve any meat, but I thought that perhaps it might put some more energy into them, so told them to land me; and inside half an hour I came back, having knocked over a wild pig and a bush buck. They managed to summon up strength enough to carry the meat on board, and then on we crawled once more.

After a time Thomas tapped me on the foot and said very quietly, "Missisi! Boatmen say to-night they take all meat and guns, kill Missisi and me, and go into bush!"

Then I knew that I had got hold of a set of real blackguards, who thought they could do what they liked because I happened to be a woman. "All right, Thomas," I whispered; "you take one gun in minute and put big piece of string in belt. When we go ashore keep close to me and be quick when I tell you do something."

After a few seconds I picked up my rifle and made a show of firing at an ibis, which gave Thomas time to get hold of my Enfield. He also picked up a length of light rope and slipped it through his belt. We drifted on, keeping a sharp eye on the so-called "rowers," but they did not make any attempt to go for us, and eventually we touched land at something after 9 p.m.

The boatmen insolently refused to carry any luggage up to the camp, so Thomas brought along the necessary things. I then invited them to come to the camp for some meat, and they came along, bringing the animals with them.

I found the chief of the village awaiting me in camp, and a large fire had been lighted ready for my arrival. I stood with Thomas close to me until the capito of the boatmen arrived. Then swinging sharply round, I seized him by both wrists, and Thomas flung the rope round him and had him pinioned before he fully realised what had happened.

Thomas then explained that we had heard their conversation about meaning to kill me and that I proposed to give him and his precious companions a little lesson which I thought they would appreciate, namely, twenty-five strokes with the chicotte. I added that if he would not lie down and take his thrashing quietly I would shoot him where he stood.

And I would have shot him, too, without an instant's hesitation, knowing that it was Thomas's life and mine or the lives of these ten cowardly brutes.

He lay down and took his beating, and the others followed his example. Then I had some dinner and turned in early, the chief setting a guard of his own people round the hut while I slept. Next morning I asked for some bananas for myself, and the chief went off with one of his men to get them. I waited some time, and then back they both came, the chief to inform me that his man had refused to get any!

Down went the man, therefore, and out came the chicotte; but after he had received ten strokes he said he would get the bananas, if I let him off the rest. I agreed, but took care to remind him that if he did *not* get the fruit he would undoubtedly get the balance of fifteen strokes. Then he and the chief set out for the second time, and in due course returned, bearing the bananas!

Having concluded this little bit of business, Thomas and I went down to the boats. I took good care that we sat well in the stern, with our ten scoundrels in front of us; and we kept the rifles handy, for I had fully realised by now that these men were out for trouble.

As we drifted along five hippo suddenly appeared, as though by magic, and began to swim straight towards the boat. I knew that if they came near enough to sneeze at us we should most certainly be upset, and I cannot swim! So, taking very careful aim, I shot the leader through the head, and the others immediately disappeared as swiftly as they had come.

I called to the men to row quickly, as at our

present rate of proceeding it was doubtful when we should reach camp, but I might as well have called to the winds. They had not the slightest intention of hurrying, and took no notice of what I said.

Then something appeared in the distance, and, as we drew nearer, I saw that it was a large boat, propelled by long bamboo poles, and full of natives. This was the boat by which I ought to have been travelling.

Nearer it came, and when our men saw it they started waving frantically and shouting at the top of their voices. The other natives shouted back, and for ten minutes it was as though Bedlam had been let loose. Presently the large boat came alongside, and the head native explained to Thomas that he had been sent up from Kassendi to meet me.

He wanted me to change boats there and then, but it looked too dangerous an undertaking, so I said the man must tow our boats to camp. He refused to do so, saying, "The Bibi must get into our boat, or we go back without her." This was a pleasant prospect, but I was not in a position to make him obey me, so up over the side of the big boat I proceeded to climb, while the little one rolled about perilously and shipped oceans of lake water. I got my feet horribly wet, but managed not to fall overboard; then the luggage had to be transhipped, and my rowers' genius quickly asserted itself. They dropped three of my best antelope heads overboard, and although Thomas dived in after them, alas, they had disappeared!

I don't know how the job was ever finished, but after a lengthy display of clumsy ineptitude, the last package was transferred, and we got going again.

There was plenty of room for my long chair on the big boat, and I soon settled down comfortably, Thomas telling the men that if they pulled quickly to camp, they would get a nice Matabishi (present). But it was a case of "out of the frying-pan into the fire," for, bad as the last lot of boatmen had been, these were even worse!

They were the laziest set of blackguards it has ever been my misfortune to set eyes on. Work they simply would not, but every few minutes they stopped to talk or to bite on a piece of maize or sugar-corn, taking not the faintest notice of what I said to them.

As for me, I threatened them with every conceivable punishment under the sun. The tortures of the Inquisition were not in it with the fearful things I promised them—but it was all quite useless and so much waste of breath!

Suddenly a white mist enveloped us, and in a moment cleared away again, leaving millions of small green flies all over everything, like some strange powder. When first they struck us these insects were alive, but a moment afterwards they were all dead. They were the small lake flies that are supposed to live but one hour; and they arrive like this, in enormous clouds, then disappear again.

By now the sun had set, and here we were, miles from camp, with apparently no prospect of ever getting in. The brutes would not work, and I felt weak and seedy, but I was in a tight corner, and there was nothing to do but see it through.

For two more weary hours we drifted on, and then a real mist came up, and the lake began to get

choppy. As luck would have it, we happened to near a small sandy opening on the edge of the lake just then, so I told the men to pull her in, and I would land and sleep there for the night. They obeyed, but when I had landed absolutely refused to bring the tent ashore and put it up. So Thomas brought some rugs and the tea-basket with him, and I took good care to have my guns and ammunition with me. I told the men they would be thoroughly punished when we reached Kassendi, but they only replied, "Perhaps the Bibi will never reach Kassendi!"

So there was to be more trouble, and there were fifteen of them to the two of us! I was too angry to be frightened, and, besides, they had no spears; but it was not a cheerful position, and if they rushed us we should not have the ghost of a chance against them.

The spot where we were standing was a tiny clearing, shut in on all sides by thick bush. The mutineers were gathered together in a group, looking on sullenly while Thomas cooked me some soup. I could not eat anything, for I felt too ill, but hoped to be better after a sleep. I therefore turned to the men and ordered them back to the boat. They said they would not go, for they proposed to sleep near me, as a guard against wild animals. Even at that moment the grim humour of their words struck me—a guard against wild animals, forsooth, when I would rather have had any kind of wild animal for neighbour just then!

I gave them another chance, but they absolutely refused to budge, so I put up my 12-bore, and told them that if they did not instantly go into the bush or back to the boat I would fire. They never moved,

and, seeing they meant business, I covered their legs, and let go with both barrels at once. Instantly a perfect pandemonium of shrieks and howls went up, and off they all went into the bush as fast as their legs could carry them!

I had a cup of tea with some brandy in it, and then Thomas and I sat down, facing one another, with the rifles and gun loaded, in case our friends turned up again. There was not much prospect of sleep, as we had to keep a sharp look-out and be ready to shoot upon the slightest movement in the bush.

As I sat there through the long, sleepless hours I wondered whether I would ever reach Kassendi alive. It seemed highly doubtful, for now I could scarcely walk, owing to an injury which I had received some months before, and which I knew required an operation. However, we got through that night in safety, and early next morning the boatmen made their appearance, still as sulky and mutinous as ever.

While the capito was giving them some directions Thomas threw a rug over his head, and in a moment we had him down and trussed like a chicken. Then I handed Thomas the chicotte, and our friend got twenty-five of the best. That seemed to set the others thinking, and they came along quietly and took ten apiece, after which we loosed the capito and told him that if I did not reach camp by midday, I would shoot every one of them as they sat in the boat.

We went down and got on board after that, and when we started I was glad to see that my threats were at last bearing fruit. We moved forward at quite a

respectable pace, and actually did reach camp by midday—that is, exactly twenty-four hours after the time when we ought to have got in!

Here Thomas procured a chicken and boiled it with some rice, and I had my first meal for five days. During this time I had consumed only tea, coffee, cocoa, and a couple of bananas. The capito now came up to tell me that Kassendi was but two hours' paddle from here, and that, if I liked, they would take me thither at once. Thomas said, "Missisi much better get porters at village near here, and machila. Perhaps a little longer, but safer. These damned black devils not good; am afraid they hurt Missisi."

But a short two hours' journey on the water appealed to me much more than a possible two days across country; besides, I thought I had at last broken the spirit of the mutineers, whose offer to take me on at once I regarded as a sign of penitence. And so, although the wind was blowing a little, and the lake was a bit choppy, and much against Thomas's wish, I agreed to complete the journey by water, hoping to get to Kassendi without further delay, for I was feeling deadly ill and suffering agonies of pain.

We got on board, Thomas and I occupying our usual places in the stern, with gun and rifles ready for emergencies. Off we started, but instead of keeping close to the shore, they took us further and further out into the lake, which was getting rougher every moment. The boat rolled from side to side, and great waves came splashing overboard, until, by the time we had been going half an hour, I was sitting up to my waist in water! This was pleasant,

considering that at the last camp I had changed my marching kit for a linen dress, white shoes, and a great coat. It was obvious to me that the brutes meant to drown me, if they could, and the odds seemed to be in their favour just then!

Thomas called to them to pull in to the shore immediately, but they took no notice of him, and I knew that unless I acted pretty promptly my hour had come. My chicotte was slung on my wrist, and I had the 12-bore in my hands. I put up the gun and aimed in the direction of the capito, but rather to his left, meaning to pepper his shoulder. Then I pulled—and missed him altogether!

There was a shout of derision, and the devils swung round at me, their poles in their hands. It was one of those moments when whoever acts quickest comes out top dog. A moment's hesitation then and I should have been pitched overboard, but the knowledge flashed through my mind before the roar of the gun had died away, and, dropping it on the floor of the boat, I gripped Thomas's shoulder with my left hand, clutched the chicotte in my right hand, and laid about me right and left with all the strength I could command, slashing them over their heads, faces, bodies, anywhere that I could reach, until I had them working as they never worked before. For the time being, at any rate, I had cowed them, and soon we were approaching the shore at double-quick time.

Thomas said, "Please, Missisi, I think little village up there. Make them pull right in, and we get out, or I'm sure they kill us!" Back to land we went, therefore, and when we got there I saw there was a small village not far off. I stood by the boat, with

chicotte and gun, and very soon had the satisfaction of seeing the cowardly brutes carry my luggage up to the village, everything, of course, soaked through, including the parrots and monkeys. I took the monkeys out of their boxes and let them run round on the dry grass for a time; and just then the chief of the village came up.

I asked him for some milk, and he had it brought to me; then Thomas told him what had happened to us, and I asked for porters, but he could not give me any, as all his men were out. There was nothing for it, therefore, but to go on with the boatmen; but this time I determined that it should be on dry land and in a machila. I called twelve of the men together and told them they were going to make me a machila, in which they would afterwards carry me to Kassendi, a two and a half hours' march. They looked uncommonly like refusing, but a glance at the gun and chicotte made them change their minds, and a machila was soon rigged up with a piece of canvas and my tent-pole.

I left Thomas in charge of the luggage, monkeys, parrot, &c., while I set out at about 2 p.m., hoping to be in Kassendi by 4.30 that afternoon, from which you will see that I am naturally of a sanguine disposition! Heaven knows, we had travelled slowly enough in the boat, but I verily believe, if it were possible, we went even slower with that machila! Every quarter of an hour or so the carriers grew tired and handed over the machila to their companions for a spell; and so we went on, changing men at every step, it seemed, until darkness descended, when they began to stumble!

Of course, there was no Kassendi in sight, and I

knew I was in for a second night on the wet ground, in wet clothes, with nothing to cover me. I called a halt, and got out of the machila under a large tree with thick branches, where, I explained, we would stay the night. By this time there really was not very much fight or run away left in the men, so I sat down with my back to the tree and the Winchester across my knees, while they settled themselves in their blankets a little way off.

As the night grew darker I turned on my electric torch, when, with one awful yell, my heroes leapt from their blankets and disappeared into the bush. I had forgotten to expect this, and the effect was so funny that I could not help laughing. It was fairly certain that so long as the torch burned my friends would remain in the bush, a fact which I did not at all regret!

I was now feeling pretty well done up, and shivering with cold. I looked longingly towards the blankets which the men had left behind them, but, cold as I was, decided only to look!!! Soon afterwards I fell asleep.

I was awakened by the howling of a hyena, and, moving the light slowly round, saw him about fifty yards away, standing and looking towards me. I had a side view of him from where I sat, so lifted the Winchester very slowly, took aim, and pulled. He fell on the spot and never moved again; but I did not go over to look at him, for I was suffering too much pain, and soon afterwards dozed off once more.

I awoke about 4.30, and blew my whistle until the men appeared. Then I staggered into the machila, and off we went, up hill and down dale, with Lake

George always in view, to remind me of where I might then have been sleeping but for the chances of war. We travelled for two hours without incident, except the endless changing of bearers, to which I had now grown accustomed. And then, at 6.30 a.m., we actually did enter Kassendi, although I found it hard to believe my own eyes, after all that I had gone through *en route*.

The Chef de Poste was, of course, still in bed, but his servant awakened him, and out he came, half dressed, and quite surprised to see me. I told him that he might well be surprised, and explained that it was no fault of the precious boatmen that I was there in safety. I asked that they might all be severely punished, so they got another richly deserved dose of chicotte on the spot, after which they were hauled off to prison by the soldiers for a month's hard labour.

Seeing that I was so ill, the Chef had his room turned out, and a fresh bed, &c., put in for my use. Then he had some hot coffee made, and sent off a number of porters to bring in Thomas and the luggage. He said he would send couriers for the doctor at Beni, a four days' journey; but I told him that would be useless, as I thought I was dying and could not last that time. But he said, "No, madame, the soldiers will do the journey in fifteen or twenty hours, and the doctor will not take any longer to get here."

He was as good as his word, and thirty hours from the time I reached Kassendi the doctor was with me and had operated.

So ended one of the most adventurous and unpleasant journeys that I have ever been called upon to negotiate. It was an experience which I cannot

help thinking would have been rather an eye-opener to some of the gentlemen who talk and write so glibly of the Congo native, painting him as a harmless child who goes in constant terror of torture and maiming.

If such terrors were, indeed, in the native mind one would not find things as they are in the Congo to-day and experiences with natives such as those that I have just related would be sought in vain. As it is, the cowed, tyrannised-over native of the story-books is in real life a happy-go-lucky, idle, cheerful individual, intent, like other people, upon doing as little work as he conveniently can and spreading that work out over as long a period as possible.

There was no earthly reason why my Lake George boatmen should not have done their best to take me to Kassendi without delay, and had there been any chance of their being maimed as a punishment it is certain that they would not have behaved as they did. But they knew as well as I did that there was not the least danger of their being subjected to such atrocities, and they acted accordingly. They preferred the chicotte to "Matabishi," * so I did my best to gratify them, and would do the same again in like circumstances.

* A present.

CHAPTER XII

MY EXPERIENCES AT KASSENDI AND AFTERWARDS, INCLUDING SOME GOOD SPORT

FOR some days after the doctor had operated upon me I lay in a semi-conscious state; then the tide began to turn and at last I was able to get out of bed. The luck was against me, though, for that very day I was back again in a raving fever! For two days and nights my life was despaired of, and the officials sat in an adjoining room waiting for the end, which never came. Once more a sound constitution pulled me round and I recovered consciousness again.

During this last attack of fever the doctor injected 1½ grammes of quinine into my forearm and quinine and caffeine into the upper part of the left arm. When I came to he was at my bedside with his hand on my wrist, and shortly afterwards I felt an intolerable pain, when he told me what he had done.

My one desire now was to sleep, but, oh dear, no! Unlike any other doctor I have ever met, he seemed to think sleep was the very last thing necessary! He began to tell me the history of his life, and with singing head I listened to the account of a strange illness which he had had in his youth.

While on the mountains one day he bent over a stream and drank some water. There were no immediate ill effects, but some days later he fell very ill. The family doctor was sent for and declared that he was dying of consumption, a disease from which his brother had died. He did not believe this himself, but the illness continued, accompanied by fearful fits of sickness. A day or two afterwards, during one of these fits, he was astounded to see a newt leap from his mouth!

He put the creature in a soap-dish, got back into bed, and pretended to be as bad as ever when the family doctor paid his next visit. "I do not think he will last long!" said that worthy, shaking his head sadly at the sorrowing parents. Whereupon the "dying" patient leaped out of bed, and punching the doctor soundly, drove him from the house.

At this point in the narrative he broke off, and said, "Madame, I must give you an injection in the leg." I thought I had had about enough injections to go on with, and said so; but out of the room he went, and presently returned with a hypodermic syringe. I looked at it doubtfully, and asked whether it was clean. He assured me that it was, and so in the end in it went, and I had my injection. But, oh, help!—two minutes afterwards the skin became discoloured, and, greatly upset, I asked him what was happening. "Oh, nothing; it will soon wear off," he declared. But my suspicions must have been well founded, for I soon had a fine quinine abscess in the leg.

I asked him to let me sleep, but he said, "No, you must eat something." I did not want to eat, but asked for some soup. "No," he replied, "you

must eat an omelette." He gave instructions to his boy, and in a quarter of an hour the latter came back with a ham omelette—Ugh! Here was a novel fever cure, and no mistake. This Italian specialist was certainly a man of originality, but the omelette went untouched so far as I was concerned.

True, we had a tug-of-war about it, but the luck was with me this time, and in the end the wretched omelette got spilt on the floor, much to my relief. The one thing I wanted now was sleep, but, no, he must continue the story of his wretched life, which I had no more strength to listen to, and at last he actually did tear himself away from me, and then I dozed off.

When I woke up again, there he was beside me, and, before I had quite collected my wits, he was pegging away at his autobiography, till I could have killed him, if I had been strong enough. I said I wanted to move on to Fort Portal, to which he replied, "You had better stop here. I am the best doctor in Africa just now. The English doctors in Uganda know nothing. I—I am the best!" I wondered what the worst were like.

Here let me "give the devil his due," and repeat a story which he told me, and which I believe was quite true. A man in the Duke of Mecklemberg's suite had been tossed two or three times by a buffalo, and afterwards attended by my Italian. He put seventy or eighty stitches into the man's face, body, and arms, and the patient recovered. "If an English doctor had attended him, he would have died," concluded this self-satisfied individual, when he told me the story. Sweet are the uses of humility!

I was now—in spite of everything—becoming convalescent, and on the first day of my convalescence a boy came running in to say that there was a white man coming. Sure enough, presently a white man stood before us, and when I looked at him I felt that Lord Kitchener's double was standing there. The Chef de Poste was as much surprised to see the stranger as I was, for we had not heard of any one being in the neighbourhood. He was a professional elephant hunter, an Australian, and had come in to get a licence to shoot elephant in that district. The Chef de Poste said he had no authority to sell them, and presently going off on his duties, left me and the newcomer together.

We had a long talk, and he told me that he had come in from Fort Portal. He said the officials here, at Kassendi, were a drunken lot. He added that the sooner I could get into Fort Portal the better for me, as Mr. Cubitt, the District Commissioner, was a gentleman, if ever there was one, while there was an excellent doctor at the Mission. I was very glad to hear this, but much too ill to move on just then. So our conversation ended for that day, the hunter returning to his camp.

As I lay there, convalescing, I could look out across a great plain, with Lake George in the distance, and often did I see elephant and buffalo moving over the plain, which was very tantalising for an incapacitated hunter!

On the following day M. Le Substitut made his appearance. He came to call on me, and I told him that, when I was well, I meant to go out after elephant. This roused him to a great state of indignation, and he said that he absolutely refused to

allow me to do so, as the permit granted by the Governor of the Katanga did not hold good in the north. I said, "All the same, I am going to shoot." At this he was more furious than ever, and the other officials joined with him in declaring that, if I did so, they would annex my guns and any ivory that I might get. Here was an unexpected diversion for the sick chamber, and I entered into the fun of the thing with all my heart. We had tremendous arguments, and, judging by their wrath, I think I must have come out victorious.

After several of these pitched battles of words, M. Le Substitut, in his more restrained moments, sat down and wrote me letters (I believe) on the subject of elephant hunting. I cannot say for certain, because I refused to accept them, "But I guess," as the comic song says.

Meanwhile, my elephant hunter came in to see me every day, so I was never bored. This post was on the Contested Boundary, and the officials were very much worried about what I may perhaps call "elephant poachers." The hunter confessed to me that he had been chasing up elephant on the Boundary, but they had gone into the swamps, so he had left them. A friend of his, however, was still after them.

As he spoke, "Bang! Bang! Bang!" sounded in our ears, and the officials came rushing up to us, crying, "You hear that, madame! You hear that! That is your English thieves trying to shoot our elephants!" The hunter and I looked at each other with a thoughtful smile, and just then there came, "Bang! Bang!" "Bang! Bang!" Upon which the officials began dancing to and fro in fury,

Elephant hunter at Kassendi.

Basket-sellers at Fort Portal.

and raving in their wrath. The hunter said to me in English, "He evidently means to get something, judging by the number of shots he's letting off.

The officials had by this time collected their wits sufficiently to sound their whistles furiously, and soon hurried preparations were being made for the capture of the invisible hunter. A posse of soldiers was ordered out and dispatched into the marshes in pursuit of the "poacher." The hunter and I sat there and laughed till the tears ran down our cheeks at the fearful scene of warlike preparation and boiling anger, and this only had the effect of making our friends the officials more cross than ever.

"When we catch him, madame, we will take all his guns and put him in prison!" they declared, on which the hunter said to me in English, "Yes, but they have to catch him first!" This was undoubtedly true, and, as a matter of fact, they never did catch him; perhaps because the hunter, on returning to his camp, sent a boy out to warn his friend that a punitive expedition was out after his blood!

The fact that I had returned M. Le Substitut's letters unopened was responsible for my next bit of amusement. All the officials visited me together, in order to renew our arguments about elephant-shooting. The argument was of a somewhat disjointed character, at any rate on their part; and, as I now felt fairly strong again, I wound up the merry meeting by asking them to supply me with porters on the following morning, so that I might tear myself away from their charming society, which was now threatening to pall on me.

I asked that the porters might be ready at 5 a.m. in the morning, and went to bed early that

night. Thomas had all the luggage lined up on the road next morning at the appointed hour, so that each porter could pick up his load and set out, but no porters put in an appearance until eight o'clock.

Then, just as we really were going to start, up came the Chef de Poste and the other officials, to know if I had anything to declare! He had already seen all my ivory, and handled it, and his present manœuvre was, of course, merely to annoy me as much as possible. He said that it must all be unpacked and weighed, for me to pay duty; but I told him no; I would see him and his friends in heaven before I unpacked for them.

Even at that early hour they had been imbibing freely, and, to vary the monotony, while they talked to me, they chewed young spring onions, interlarded with an occasional glass of port! "You have hippo ivory," he said during our argument, "and I do not know its weight." "Then I'll leave you to guess," I retorted; "and if you don't guess quickly I shall go away and leave you."

In the end he told me what to pay, and I paid, after which I shook the dust of Kassendi from my feet, with much satisfaction, and set out for Fort Portal, which is, of course, in British territory.

After travelling uneventfully for some time, we came to a river in full flood. It was not more than fifty yards across, but the current was tremendously strong, and it took as many as four porters to carry over a single load, and, even then, they only accomplished the task with great difficulty. The water only reached to their knees, but it was all they could do to keep their footing.

When all the luggage had been safely deposited on the further shore there came the question of how I was to get across. We arranged it this way. Two men made a seat for me by crossing their arms and gripping hands, then two other men stood behind them, which made four. Four more men then ranged themselves round the original four, thus making a human rope, and I threw my arms round as many necks as I could reach, and off we started.

I don't know how my carriers enjoyed it, but personally I found that crossing a very unpleasant ordeal. As we slowly plunged forward through the swirling torrent everything seemed to go round and round before my eyes, so at last I shut them tight, wondering whether I should find myself at the bottom of the river or on dry land when I opened them again. Meanwhile, the porters on the far side watched our progress with much interest, probably hoping that the Bibi would be swept away! However, we got over safely, like the gallant Horatius of old, the whole operation, from start to finish, having occupied two hours!

Scarcely had we climbed the opposite bank when there came a wild shout from behind, and, looking back, we saw a single native attempting to fight his way over to the bank from which we had set out. He was in obvious difficulties, and was shouting for some one to go to his help, but even while we looked, and before any one had time to move in his direction, he was swept from his feet and disappeared in the rushing waters. I asked some of the men to try and save him, but they shook their heads, and Thomas said, "No good, Missisi; he gone! Nobody catch him!" My boy spoke truly, for his body was found

some days later a long way down the river. I heard afterwards that he was a courier, travelling with a letter.

We went on for some distance without incident, and then Thomas, who had gone on ahead, came rushing back to me in a great state of excitement, exclaiming, "Oh, Missisi, please come quick! Elephant all by himself, playing with trees! Come quick, and plenty meat and ivory!"

Almost as excited as himself, I at once followed Thomas slowly and noiselessly into the bush. We walked for about twenty minutes in absolute silence, and then he suddenly touched my arm and said, "Shoot!" I gazed about wildly in all directions, but, for the life of me, could see nothing at all like an elephant.

"Where? Where?" I asked breathlessly.

"There! There! Oh, Missisi, shoot!" he returned, in an agony of impatience. And still I gazed and gazed, but could not see anything.

Panting with excitement, Thomas caught my arm, and fairly dragged me round a small bush, behind which we had been crouching. Then, pointing upward, "Shoot! Shoot! Quick!" he gasped.

I looked and looked in the direction indicated, and presently saw what I thought to be a leaf moving slightly. It was no leaf, however, but the beast's ears flicking to and fro. Then I saw him, standing with his tail towards me, in an impossible position for a shot from the place where we were lying.

I was not going to risk wounding him slightly and losing him afterwards, so, getting on to my hands and knees, I began to crawl round on all-fours, trailing my ·405 by my side. It was an exciting little

journey, that short stalk, and all the time I was in an agony lest the brute should take it into his head to move away. We seemed to be crawling for hours, but in reality the whole movement only occupied a few minutes, and presently, looking up once more, I found myself in a fine position for a decent shoulder shot.

Drawing a deep breath, I took steady aim just beneath the shoulder, and fired. In a moment there was a tremendous trumpeting, and down he came with a crash, but at once tried to rise again, and, while he was struggling to do so, I got in a couple more shots, which effectually flattened him out.

When he lay still, the boys rushed in and began sawing off his tail, which they gave to me. I have a number of bracelets made from the hairs, as mementoes of my second elephant.

This cutting off of the tail is a favourite dodge of the boys, to find out whether the elephant is dead or no. Sometimes one of these animals will play 'possum, and, when the boys come within reach, will lash out with its trunk, breaking the back of any one it strikes; but if it does not move when a hunting-knife is applied to its tail, you may be sure the beast is dead.

This one was quite dead, for my last two shots had gone right through the heart and lungs. He was a fine animal, too, and the tusks weighed 68 lbs. and 69 lbs. respectively, and were fine ivory.

The boys do not like one to watch them remove the nerve from the tusks, as they say it brings bad luck. When they have taken it out, they go some distance into the bush and bury it. In the old days the witch-doctors used it for poison.

Not wishing to remain for the cutting-up, I moved on with Thomas, leaving the men to bring the tusks into camp. We had been going about an hour, when I saw a herd of buffalo cross the path about 250 yards ahead. We waited about fifteen minutes, and then moved forward, Thomas as keen as mustard that I should get a "Boeuf," as he called it.

This time the luck of the novice was certainly with me, for scarcely had we been going ten minutes when I saw a fine-looking bull all by his lonely, and not 200 yards from the path! I wondered if it were possible to get him, and sat down and took off my boots, as I can run faster without them. Then down on hands and knees we went, creeping forward, almost afraid to breathe!

As we drew closer my heart began to throb horribly, and I made sure that Thomas must hear it, because he touched me on the arm, and whispered, "Don't be 'fraid! Come round this big bush, and if he run this way after you shoot, he fall into bush and not see you."

Once more we crawled forward, I shaking all over, to where a large clump of thick bushes grew. When we got safely behind these I sat down to collect my waning courage, for I felt very shaky, I must confess. Then, having steadied myself somewhat, I stood up behind the bushes and looked through them.

The brute was facing me, grazing as peacefully as a farmyard bullock, but I knew that I had no farmyard specimen to deal with, and when I tried to raise the rifle my arms refused to move. I was petrified with funk! All the dreadful stories I had heard about charging buffalo passed through my mind, and a cold chill stole down my back at the

bare idea of being gored by the fierce-looking monster ahead.

Had I been there alone I should most certainly have bolted, but I did not dare to show the white feather in front of Thomas and so forfeit his faith in my bravery and skill. There he was beside me, saying, "Shoot! shoot!" so there was nothing for it but to kill or be killed by the beast!

With a great effort of will I managed to get the rifle up to my shoulder ("Mine not to question why, Mine but to do or die!"). Then, in a spasm of fearsome bravery, I took pot-luck with the sights and pulled the trigger, much as, I imagine, a suicide does.

The bullet took him right in the nostrils and appeared to knock him giddy, for he staggered round and round in a circle, looking utterly bewildered. Meanwhile Thomas and I had shifted round to the left side of the bush, and from here, as he presented a full broadside to me, I loosed again at him. Instantly he turned and charged the bush behind which we had been hiding. As he went plunging head first into it I fired again and he fell, but tried hard to rise again. This shot, however, smashed his shoulder, and his efforts were in vain, so, going up a little closer, I fired a third time, putting the bullet clean through his heart.

He was an old bull, with a fine pair of horns, and now that it was all over I felt more than delighted at having bagged him. Even an old hunter does not often succeed in getting an elephant and buffalo within the hour, and I determined to bring his head and the tusks of my last elephant back to England in honour of the most successful day's big-game

hunting that I had done—I was going to write "enjoyed," but, to be strictly truthful, it had not all been enjoyment!

Both these beasts I shot in the country that was then known as the "Contested Boundary," but which has been handed over to Belgium since I left the Congo. Being no man's land at that time, it was a great place for the elephant hunters who shot without a licence, and hundreds of elephants must have fallen to the rifles of these men. It is as well for the game that the boundary question has now been definitely settled.

Whether it was the excitement of my buffalo hunt I know not, but when I reached camp that evening my old friend the fever laid hold of me again, and I went down with a temperature of 106, being at times slightly delirious. But I was determined not to stay here, fever or no fever, so told Thomas to have a machila made, in which I could be carried in to Fort Portal.

I slept in camp the night, and next morning set off in the machila that Thomas had had made for me. We marched all day and in the evening reached British territory. The chief came into camp, and I asked him to have relays of porters ready for me all along the route to Fort Portal, as I wanted to make forced marches thither in order to see the doctor as soon as possible.

He was, I knew, one of the big chiefs in this district, who could do this for me if he liked. He suggested to Thomas that I should write a letter, which he would send in to the British District Commissioner at Fort Portal, saying that a white lady was ill at his village, and I had just enough sense

left to write a few lines, after which I remember nothing more for hours.

When I opened my eyes again I was lying on my bed in the rest-house and Thomas was pouring spoonfuls of tea and brandy between my lips. I asked what was the matter, and Thomas answered, "Oh, Missisi, these Congo porters! Not one will go and fetch water. Only dirty water in lake, so I have to go one hour walk there and one hour walk back, and Missisi all alone! I think to-morrow, if well, shoot them; all ought to be dead!"

I sat up and finished the tea, and told Thomas to start the porters off early in the morning with the luggage and my tent. It was, I knew, useless to remain here with Thomas fighting these men alone, and I was too ill to take a hand with them myself.

I fell asleep then, and remember no more until early next morning, when Thomas's voice, accompanied by the swish-swish of the chicotte, recalled my wandering senses to the present. The porters were being sent off, which was always a lively job when they were a lazy set, like my present lot.

Of all the men I then had, the worst was a herculean fellow, stronger by far than any of the others, and lazier than words can tell. He was capable of carrying the heaviest load I had, but after sampling every package I possessed, had finally come to the conclusion that his strength was just equal to sustaining the weight of *my parrot*, for which he invariably made a bee-line whenever we set out on the march.

The present occasion was no exception to the rule, for I presently heard Thomas shout, "Tent-ie!" in reply to which the voice of the Hercules came

back, "No, Chusiku!" (parrot). Swish! went the chicotte, and from my bed I could see the lazy one pick up the tent and set off in quite a hurry. I wondered how long he would keep up the pace!

As the porters disappeared from sight, Thomas came in and said, "Missisi want breakfast. Have made nice soup from buffalo; please have some." I sampled the soup, and it was all that Thomas said, just like beef-tea, in fact. Thomas then told me, "White man not far from here. I told his servant Missisi ill and all alone. I think he will come and see."

After breakfast I dressed, and just as Thomas was packing up the last of the things, in bicycled a white man—an English hunter. He was very much astonished to see me sitting there, as he thought his black boy had been making up stories when he said a white woman was travelling alone and ill. He said the best thing for me to do was to get into Fort Portal as quickly as possible, though he had every reason to believe that the District Commissioner was away on *safari*. But, even if this were so, he said the Mission people would look after me. He then suggested that I should come on slowly to his camp and have lunch with him, while my porters got on to my next camp, which would be near a river, where everything could be got ready for me by the time I arrived that evening.

I accepted his invitation, and away he went, while I waited to see my kitchen, bed, and chairs taken up by the porters. Then, getting into my machila, we went slowly on. There was never the slightest difficulty about going *slowly* through the bush!

We had not gone more than a mile and a half

when we came upon the herculean tent-porter, sound asleep, with his head resting on the tent! He had set out at 4.30, and should almost have reached camp by then, so my fury can be imagined. Thomas said, "Give me string, Missisi," and he made a kind of running knot which he slipped round the wrists of the sleeper and then drew it tight. This woke him with a start, and he was just in time to see me hand the chicotte to Thomas, after which he had a stiff dose of medicine: ten drops—I mean strokes, which, however, did not even mark the skin. At this point Thomas said, "He says he will carry the tent if Missisi will give him no more." Thinking that he meant it, I let him off the balance, and started him going once more with the tent. I then got out of the machila and sat down by the roadside to have a smoke and talk to Thomas, who looked rather worried. He had evidently got the porters on his mind, and said, "Missisi, things going to be lively, I think, before we reach Fort Portal." I asked him why, but he replied, "Never mind, soon find out. Porter with tent will make plenty trouble, so look out."

Having rested, I re-entered the machila, and we moved on again, reaching the camp of the English hunter an hour later. But just before we got into the camp, to my amazement, there we found that wretched devil of a tent-carrier once more fast asleep by the roadside!

This was altogether too much for my patience, and I told the hunter all about the tricks the man was playing me. Without a word, he got up, called for his capito, and had the loin cloth stripped from my culprit, after which he gave him twenty-five of

the very best, without, however, making the slightest mark on the brute's skin.

"Your porter must have had chicotte from the day of his birth," he said, "judging from the thickness of his skin. Better let me get you another, and send him back."

Needless to say, I was only too pleased to agree to this, and so I got rid of the very laziest and thickest-hided wretch whom it has ever been my fate to employ.

Having adjusted this little matter, we sat down and enjoyed a very excellent lunch. The hunter asked me what luck I had met with in shooting, and appeared to be interested when I told him. I had noticed that he walked a bit lame, and later on he told me why. He had, he said, been tossed by buffalo three times. On the last occasion he had climbed a tree, thinking he would be out of reach of the infuriated beast, but the tree was only a small one, and he had not been able to drag his legs up high enough, and the animal had gored them badly.

I told him that, personally, I never wanted to see a buffalo again, and his stories of the brutes confirmed me still further in my opinion that the buffalo is a mighty fine animal—at a distance !

CHAPTER XIII

I REACH FORT PORTAL, AND MEET WITH GREAT KINDNESS.

DURING lunch the hunter sent his boy off with a message to the chief, who, he told me, owned nearly all the land between that place and Fort Portal; and soon after our meal was over the chief himself rode into camp on a nice-looking half-bred Arab pony. My companion asked him to see that I had plenty of porters to carry me through without any delay, and in reply the chief promised that everything should be all right as far as porters and food were concerned. He then retired, and, after resting a little while longer, I resumed my journey.

The country through which I passed was very pleasant, fairly flat, and quite picturesque, with numbers of birds everywhere and many flowers. There was a certain amount of water about, and on many occasions I saw wild duck flying round; but I did not stop to try for any of them. At 6 p.m. I reached my camp, which was pitched near a running stream, and I had only just got in in time, for immediately afterwards a terrific thunderstorm came on and continued all through the night.

Next morning I started off early, and determined

to travel by forced marches from now onward, as I felt very ill, and knew that it was important I should get the trek over as soon as possible. The porters did not take at all kindly to the idea, but I promised them meat when we reached camp that night, on which they consented to do the extra distance. The chief had given me a capito who understood how anxious I was to finish the journey quickly, and right nobly did this man acquit himself in my interests.

When we met with any natives on the road he would go up to them and explain that he required their services as machila carriers for a time, at which they would protest vigorously. But he was very firm, and explained that it was the order of the chief that they should help me, and on hearing this they came along quietly until we met some fresh men to take their places. This was " forced labour " with a vengeance, and in British territory, too ! But they did not take it to heart much, especially when I gave them each a piece of meat as a reward for their exertions. The capito explained that this was quite unnecessary generosity on my part ; but I have a shrewd suspicion that he said so because he wanted all the meat himself.

During the course of the day at least fifty different porters must have taken a hand at carrying me, and the consequence was that I made excellent progress, arriving in camp just at the psychological moment when Thomas had dinner ready for me.

The chief had brought in bananas, fresh milk, and eggs, and Thomas had made me an omelette and some soup, which I took, and then went to bed, feeling horribly ill. However, I was lucky enough to get a good sleep that night, without being once disturbed.

I was absolutely determined to get into Fort Portal next day by means of " forced labour " and a double march, so started off early, following the same tactics as on the previous day with regard to porters. At the first camp I stopped for lunch, but first distributed meat amongst the men, telling them to press on as fast as they could to Fort Portal, after they had eaten it. Then I sat down to my own lunch, and before I had finished they were up and off, it being then about 11 a.m. I calculated that they ought to reach their destination about 2 p.m.

After lunch I went to sleep, and woke up about three o'clock, when I renewed my trek, employing more " forced labour " as I went. For some distance we travelled along a very broad road, and then turned sharply into the bush and began to traverse a very narrow path. I looked ahead and saw that there were many hills to be climbed, which was rather dispiriting, and the further we went the slower my machila porters walked, even though they had been helped so much by the men whose services we had " pressed."

At 6 p.m. we still seemed to be miles away from our destination, for now, with the aid of glasses, I could see houses in the far distance—the roofs of Fort Portal! The more I talked and shouted, and the more Thomas laid on the chicotte, the slower those wretches went, until at last I gave it up in despair, and left them to go at their own pace.

Presently we approached a river, and there, calmly resting on the bank, were every one of my carriers! The sight roused me to fresh energy and wrath, and I bade them to be up and off as quickly as they liked. They refused to move, assuring me that it

was too dark, upon which I said nothing, but got out of my machila, when they at once picked up their loads in great haste and disappeared at a pace which showed they had plenty of strength left when it suited them.

Darkness descended, and presently we had overtaken them. There seemed to be porters everywhere, jogging slowly forward with their loads, like so many snails. I worried about them no more now, but determined to let them do as they liked, while I pressed on to Fort Portal without them. My carriers kept stumbling, and implored me to call a halt, but I refused to do so, having thoroughly made up my mind that I would *not* sleep out on the wet ground that night, whatever happened.

On we went, through banana plantations and along broad roads that seemed to have no end. Small fires shone out through the night on either side of me, and the sound of singing in the distance reached my ears. Then I remembered that this was Christmas Eve! A curious way of spending Christmas Eve, truly, and I certainly did not feel very "Christmassy" just then, I assure you!

And then at last we began to pass houses, and I knew that we had really reached Fort Portal, hard as it was to believe the fact. Suddenly we were stopped by a policeman, who asked us what we wanted, and in reply Thomas inquired the way to the District Commissioner's house.

The guardian of the law held up his lantern so that the rays fell on me, and I could see from the expression of his face that he thought I was a beggar or some equally questionable character. I did not blame him either, for I presented a most

dirty and disreputable appearance. However, he took us in tow, and guided us to the house we wanted, what he thought of us being conclusively proved by the fact that he took us to the *back door ! !*

I got out of my machila and sat down on the cold stone steps, ready to cry at the slightest provocation. From where I sat I could see into the dining-room, where a jolly party of guests were at dinner, it being then a quarter past nine. I tried to get the natives to take in a message, but they would not do so—my last obstacle on that day's march !

I stood up and called out, "Can I see Mr. Cubitt, please ?" and immediately a tall man rose from the table and came out to where I was.

Never shall I forget the look of horror and amazement on his face when he saw this dilapidated white woman on his back-door step ! And when I told him I had just accomplished a journey *alone* through the Congo, amazement gave way to disbelief !

I told him my porters were miles behind on the route, and he asked me at what hour I had started, and from what camp. When I told him the porters had left the last camp at 11 a.m., and were not in yet he was absolutely horrified, as he said it was only a 2½ hours' march from Fort Portal. He then called his orderly, and gave instructions that police should be sent out to bring in the mutineers.

He insisted that I should come in and join the party just as I was, so in I went and sat down to an excellent dinner. His hospitality was unbounded, for he told me I must make his house my head-

quarters while I remained in Fort Portal, which I did for five weeks. During that time everybody in and around Fort Portal did all they could to make my stay a pleasant one, and greatly did I enjoy my visit to this most hospitable place.

For the first day or two I was a bit seedy, but a week's rest worked wonders, and when, at the end of that time, my host suggested a little excursion to the Crater Lakes, I was delighted. The careful arrangements made for this Saturday to Monday trip astonished me. It really took as much thinking out as the whole of my trek had done, and three times the number of porters! But the end justified the means, everything being splendidly managed, and no single item forgotten that contributed to our comfort.

It was a one hour's march to the lakes, and when we arrived in camp we found our tents pitched just where we could get glimpses of the lake as we sat at luncheon. The chief of the village having heard that we were coming, had erected two large grass houses, or bandans as they are called, the posts covered with red and white cotton stuff, entwined with slender branches of green ferns, which gave the camp quite an *en fête* appearance.

We stored the food in one of these houses, reserving a small space for my monkeys, whom, of course, I could not leave behind, even for two days. They enjoyed the trip as much as any one, and caused great amusement amongst the natives by their antics, especially my red Nile Coloboose one. She varied the monotony of things by grabbing the eggs and eating them, to say nothing of a cold chicken which happened to be within reach on one

occasion. She was evidently quite a gourmet, as the only parts she ate were the wings and breast. The boys tried their best to take the bird from her, but when she showed her teeth and stood up on her hind-legs, they let well alone.

On the following day we went down to the lake, Mr. Cubitt intent upon some duck shooting. Into the boat we got, and my host elected himself as oarsman, but we had not gone half a dozen yards before I knew that sculling was not his particular *forte*. Indeed, his efforts threw me into fits of laughter, in which he very good-humouredly joined.

Every time he pulled a stroke he either caught a crab or lost a scull. Then the boat would whirl round in a circle, while his look of surprise, which seemed to say, "What on earth's going to happen next?" was simply killing. To crown matters, we at last got caught in a bed of floating lilies, and it took our combined efforts to fight a way out into open water again. In the end we managed to clear our barque of her encumbrances, and, panting but triumphant, floated out to safety.

By this time we had frightened all the duck away from our end of the lake, and it seemed to me highly probable that if Mr. Cubitt was permitted to row any further, our bag would be *nil*, as the birds were evidently not accustomed to his style of oarsmanship. I therefore proposed that the sculls should be entrusted to me, and this being carried unanimously, we set out once more, I rowing.

Although I say it, who shouldn't, this was a great improvement, and we were presently able to get within range of the duck, which we followed up and down the lake for about three hours. When we

landed at the end of that time our bag was six duck, two kingfishers, and a small green bird which I kept for a head-dress.

We returned to camp in good spirits, as we thought of the fine wild-duck dinner which we were going to have that night, but our hopes were doomed to most cruel disappointment. Thomas cooked the ducks with his usual care, and served them up at the appointed time, but what kind of duck they were I cannot imagine, for there was not a bit of flesh on them—nothing but bone, which was a very bitter disappointment indeed!

Next day we returned to Fort Portal, to find that others had been out shooting, and had sent in some guineafowl and wild duck, the latter with meat on their bodies. In the afternoon a couple of elephant hunters came in to tell us they had followed up an old bull elephant through the forest to within about seven miles from Fort Portal. From all accounts, they appeared to have filled it with lead, but the old fellow had wandered on his way, taking his tusks with him. These, they assured us, must have weighed at least 150 lbs. each, a statement which threw every one into a state of great excitement, and preparations to spoor the animal during the following week were at once undertaken. This struck me as being rather waste of energy, as elephants travel fast, even when wounded, and the chances seemed all against this one being bagged.

During the week the King of Toro came in to see me: a splendid-looking man, with fine features and a charming manner, who reminded me very much of the Maharajah of Kapurthala. I got him to stand

while I took a photograph of him and his head chiefs, with the result shown.

The elephant hunt did not come off. At least, it did really, only Mr. Cubitt and I did not join in it. I had a touch of fever, and then, the 15th of January being my birthday, we went out to a place near Fort Portal, where I met a delightful little doctor who gave me a dear little monkey, on which he had been experimenting for sleeping sickness. As the tsetse had not bitten him, I rescued him from an early grave, and he now sports himself at the London Zoo, with two others I brought home with me.

That night at dinner Mr. Cubitt brought forth, as a great treat for my birthday, a jar of *pâté de foie gras*. We all ate some, and within three hours sincerely wished we had not done so! I did not know how it affected the others until next day, because the doctor and Mr. Cubitt started for Fort Portal before I was up. Personally, I was a fearful wreck when I did get up, but I managed to get back to Fort Portal, where I found the doctor and my host sitting on the verandah, imbibing a mixture of morphia, chloroform, and brandy, in which I quickly joined them. So ended the effects of my birthday dinner!

I may say the *foie gras* had been in the store of an Indian for over a year! The moral, I suppose, is, "Don't be greedy!" or rather, perhaps, "Look before you eat."

During the evening three of our bold elephant hunters returned, with the sad news that they had sighted the big elephant, at which they had blazed furiously, only to see the beast sail serenely on. A fourth hunter, however, had gone on after it, swear-

ing he would not return until he had bagged the beast. But his vow remained unfulfilled, and he himself returned four days later, utterly worn out and disgusted beyond words. With good reason, too, for he had approached to within ten yards of his quarry, then fired—and missed!

To revive the drooping spirits of the hunters, I made a round of cocktails, and for the rest of the evening the word "elephant" was taboo.

I now began to think about moving on again, but when I mentioned the subject to my host, he would not hear of it, and declared that I was still far from strong, and that it would be madness to set out for Kampala yet awhile, the distance being something like 285 miles. And, sure enough, two days later I awoke with my old enemy upon me, and a temperature of 104.

Two nights afterwards, while the fever was still on me, I was awakened by an awful rumbling; then my bed began to rock from side to side until I wondered if it would turn completely over and bury me beneath it! I was terrified, and shrieked to my host, who slept in the next room, but received no answer.

By this time drums were being beaten at the police quarters, directly behind the house, and I could also hear others being thumped in the village. Then at last it gradually dawned on me that this must be an earthquake, and I lay there enjoying (?) the new experience until the rocking ceased, and all was quiet once more.

I settled myself down for sleep, and had just dosed off when a rifle-shot rang out immediately beneath my window. I jumped out of bed and rushed to the window, just in time to see the sentry sprinting away

THOMAS, MRS. ROBY'S "BOY," STANDING AGAINST A LION TRAP.

MR. CUBITT AND THE KING OF TORO AT FORT PORTAL.

down the compound and firing his rifle as he went. Wondering what on earth had happened, I returned to bed, and next morning learned that the man had been shooting at a leopard, but had missed, while my host had not heard either the shooting or the earthquake alarum, which spoke well for his powers of slumber!

For three days, with the assistance of a delightful doctor from the Mission, I wrestled with my enemy, and once more conquered. On the third day I dressed and sat on the verandah, when all the nice people from the Mission and around came to inquire after me, and, incidentally, to play tennis and sample my cocktails.

I may here add that I had several good offers to remain at Fort Portal as cocktail-maker and housekeeper-in-general to all the bachelors in the district; but Mr. Cubitt would not let me accept any of them, no, not even when the Chief of Police and a Mr. Russell arrived from Kampala and offered me a situation! I almost accepted the Chief of Police's offer, but the others swore they'd kill him if I did, so it was no go, as I did not want the poor man's death on my head on top of my other trials and tribulations.

We had such a jolly dinner that evening, my host and his two friends making a splendid trio, and I was really tired out with laughter by the time the meal was over. I therefore went to bed early, leaving the others to a three-handed game of poker.

While reading in bed, I happened to look down at my feet and discovered that I had jiggers under all my nails. They must have been there for days without my noticing them, for they had not only made them-

selves comfy, but had nested a family as well. I had probably got them at the Crater Lakes.

It took me a good hour to dislodge them with a sharp pen-knife, and then my feet bled so badly there was nothing to do but slip on a tea-gown and go to my host for some iodine. I not only got what I asked for, but also took a hand at poker afterwards, and won!

A rather funny incident happened next day. A woman and her husband, who came to tennis, were boasting of some fine port they had. The couple had been entertained by Mr. Cubitt several times since their arrival, and had been in Africa long enough to know that when one runs out of anything in the housekeeping line, it is customary to borrow from one's neighbour until stores arrive. Mr. Cubitt therefore said jokingly, "Oh, I want a bottle of port for Mrs. Roby. I'll just send my orderly to the rest-house, and tell your boy to give him a bottle."

No sooner said than done, and we all laughed and forgot the incident.

At dinner that night Mr. Cubitt's boy turned up with a new brand of whisky, which was sent away. On the following afternoon our charming couple came in for cocktails, and one of them, picking up the bottle of whisky, said, "Hello, Cubitt, you drink the same brand as we do." "Do I?" answered my host; "I think it's just arrived from Entebbe." And so the matter ended for the moment. As we were going into dinner, however, a note arrived from the lady, which ran something like this—

Sir,—I should like to know why you told us a lie this afternoon about the whisky. You knew very well it was our

whisky you were drinking, and you had a great deal of assurance in letting your boy take our case of whisky. Kindly remember this is not a bachelor establishment, and return our whisky at once, as we want it.

Yours, &c., &c.

Poor Mr. Cubitt was simply horrified, and the rest of us were furious, for a kinder and more generous man to his fellow-creatures one could not meet. He kept open house for all who came along, very often going without things himself in order to give to others.

He called his boy, and we found the stupid orderly had brought away a case of whisky, of which we had used one bottle; so Mr. Cubitt returned the case, and another one with it, at the same time sending a note to express his regret at the mistake. But I'm blest if the wretched creature did not send back a letter to say she did not believe him. She kept the whisky, though!

We all did our best to cheer our dejected host, and in the end succeeded in passing a very pleasant evening. Next morning some cows arrived for him, with a note from a native Government clerk, couched in the following terms—

To Cubitt, Esqre.

How are you, Sir? I salute you very much, how are you getting on? Many thanks for your doing the Government work, and also for your Sofari. I need to see you very much when God will keep us alive to meet each other. And now I am still doing the Government work.

Well, goodbye, Sir,

God bless you.

I am your friend,

E. K. Kaima.

Just after lunch, as we were sitting on the verandah having coffee, thirty or forty Indian

tradespeople arrived in a state of great excitement. Mr. Cubitt got up and questioned them, to find out what was the matter, and they told him they had been swindled.

Outside the British boundary there lived a tribe of natives ruled over by an Englishman who called himself their chief, or king. This man had come to the country many years before, had married a chieftainess, and thus made himself king of the tribe.

The Indians now told Mr. Cubitt that the man had come in to demand stores from them, and when asked for payment, had pulled his gun out as though to fire at them. Fortunately one of them had knocked his hand down so that the charge entered the ground; but although he had not killed any of them, he also had not paid them: hence their excitement.

While the Indians were still voicing their troubles up came the English "chief" himself, obviously the worse for drink. Mr. Cubitt gave him a little good advice, and explained that he would be arrested if he was not careful. To this he replied—

"Well, Mr. Cubitt, I have plenty of money, and I meant to pay for the stores all right, and I will pay for them, sir. These fellows attacked me first, but I will pay, never fear, before I go back."

So, with another word of warning, Mr. Cubitt let him go away, and he returned to his own tent. A rough sort of individual he was, as you may imagine, after so many years in the wilds, although, for the matter of that, he could never have been exactly "blue-blooded."

Next day he came into the village again, and once

more we were advised of his presence; for, as we were promenading, we saw a big crowd of natives, and going up to them, found our gentleman, this time really "blind to the world." He was carried back to his tent, and later started off to rejoin his own people across the border; but before leaving British territory he shot at a man and killed him. The officials therefore set a watch for him, and his next visit to Fort Portal will probably be his last before going on a longer journey, from which there is no return.

While I was at Fort Portal my friend, the Australian elephant hunter, came in, very ill with fever. Mr. Cubitt's house was, of course, open to him, and he took all his meals there, returning to his own tent to sleep at night. I therefore saw a good deal of him, and listened to many of his reminiscences concerning elephants and elephant hunters.

One of his stories concerned a well-known hunter, who was going up the lake near the Contested Boundary when some Congo soldiers stopped him and asked him to go and see the Belgian officials. Thinking he was safer in his own boat, and evidently having a guilty conscience, he refused, and told the men that if the officials wished to see him, they must come down to the lake. His message was delivered, but the officials did not come down, for the best of good reasons—they could not, having imbibed not wisely, but too well! The soldiers returned, and one of them laid his hand on the hunter's arm, as though to detain him. Instantly the hunter knocked him down, and pushed out on to the lake, upon which the other soldiers raised their guns. Before they could fire the man in the boat drew a bead on

them and fired into them, killing one man on the spot.

It was an extremely unfortunate incident, and, as a matter of fact, the officials only wanted the Englishman to come up and have a drink with them. A coloured soldier, however, has no right to lay his hands on a white man, and when the matter was inquired into at Boma later, the hunter was exonerated and the officials discharged.

Since our last meeting the Australian had succeeded in grabbing a couple of elephants on the Contested Boundary, which cheered him somewhat; but he was really ill, and had in the end to go down to Nairobi for treatment.

I have already mentioned the jolly party we were at Mr. Cubitt's house when the Chief of Police and Mr. Russell joined us. One night at dinner there was a great discussion about a tailor's shop in the Burlington Arcade, where Captain Riddick, the Chief of Police, declared he had his clothes made and fitted on. The rest of us simply laughed at the idea, and insisted that there was no tailor in the Arcade where you could possibly be fitted, the shops being too small. The more we talked the more angry the captain became, until at last he betted Mr. Russell £100 to one rupee that he had been going to this tailor for twenty years, and had always been fitted there for his clothes.

The bet was promptly taken, and I was appointed umpire, half the amount to go to me, and I promised to interview the tailor on my return home. This having been settled, Mr. Cubitt began to talk about two lovely flower-shops at the upper end of the Arcade, on which I cut in and bet him an even fiver

that there was no real flower-shop in the whole Arcade. He took me, but felt so sure he was right that he promised to spend the £5 I should lose on flowers for me when he came home on leave. I thanked him for his kindness, but told him *I* should be spending *his* fiver on a new hat.

Here let me tell the results of our wagers before continuing my story. On the first day I went out after returning to London, I visited the Burlington Arcade, found the tailor's shop, and was at once ushered into the fitting-room! The man told me that the captain had been a customer for twenty years!!! Then I asked him if there were any flower-shops in the Arcade, and he said "No"; but "seeing is believing, so off I went to find them, and soon discovered that I had won a fiver. I immediately hurried back to my hotel, and wrote to Mr. Cubitt, telling him that he had lost.

But to return to Fort Portal. While here they weighed me and found that I turned the scale at only 7 stone, whereas when I entered the Congo my weight had been 10 stone 5 lbs., which shows what constant attacks of fever will do for one, especially when combined with the attentions of mutinous porters.

I had now been at Fort Portal nearly five weeks, and determined not to trespass any further upon the hospitality of my generous host. As a matter of fact, he, Mr. Russell, and Captain Riddick had arranged to go off on an elephant hunt shortly, so I thought this would be a good time to be moving on myself, although Mr. Cubitt wanted me to stay even longer and get absolutely fit before I resumed my travels.

CHAPTER XIV

I RESUME MY MARCH, AND MEET WITH FRESH DIFFICULTIES

IT was arranged that I should leave Fort Portal on the same day that Mr. Cubitt and his friends started on their elephant hunt, and when I announced this fact to my friends the bachelors they vied with each other in discovering souvenirs of Fort Portal for me to take away. Very nice souvenirs they were, too.

One day at lunch, about this time, I got a great shock. I called for Thomas, who came rushing up in great haste. I gazed and gazed at him, then rubbed my eyes and gazed again. "Why, what's the matter with you?" I asked; "what have you been doing to yourself?"

"I been cutting my face off, Missisi," he replied tranquilly, meaning that he had been shaving.

"Yes, yes," I said, "but what else? You look different, somehow."

He answered, "Have had my hair cut to kill the flies that bite!" And that was too much for us, the whole table going off into convulsions of laughter. The intelligent boy had had his head shaved.

On the day before my departure Mr. Cubitt sent round everywhere to try and get some wine and stores for me, but all he could find was one bottle of brandy and no stores. I say he sent everywhere, but of course this does not include the generous couple whom he had offended over the whisky incident. We did not dare to approach them! Mr. Cubitt was expecting some stores up from Entebbe, and told me to stop any porters I met *en route* and help myself, if they were bound for Fort Portal.

On this trek the King of Toro was to be responsible for my porters, and Mr. Cubitt said he would give me a police escort. I was rather against the escort, but my host explained how the police would take entire charge of the carriers, and thus relieve me of all anxiety in this direction. In fact, he painted such a rosy picture of a comfortable journey for me that in the end I agreed to accept his kind offer, and let the police come with me. (I pictured about fifty of them sending my porters along at a splendid pace and having my tent up at every camp long before I got in!)

I was too tired for a farewell dinner on my last evening, and went to bed early instead. Next morning Captain Riddick and Mr. Russell went off early with all Mr. Cubitt's things, the latter remaining behind to escort me as far as their first camp, where we were to lunch together and then depart on our separate roads.

My host was still in bed when I got up to send my porters off. He had given me a very good native to act as capito; that is to say, he turned out to be very good at foraging for supplies, and also at getting the porters to *start*. To make them *keep going* was, I

soon came to the conclusion, a task beyond the reach of any merely human being!

But, you will say, "What of the police escort?" Ah, the escort was indeed a surprise, for it consisted of just two policemen! When I had recovered from the first shock of surprise (I had expected fifty, you see) I was rather glad there were only two, because if they did turn out a fraud it would be fairly easy to keep an eye on them, whereas fifty frauds would have been a considerable undertaking.

Well, I got them all started hours before my host was up, and then, at about nine o'clock, he and I set off on bicycles for the camp. The roads were in splendid condition, but very hilly, which gave us an opportunity of "coasting" every now and then. On the way we came up with numbers of cattle being driven out to graze, which upset me considerably (and literally), for they had very big horns and the wretched natives who were supposed to be driving them beat the brutes in all directions, so that one could not tell where they were coming next.

I got out of the difficulty by falling off my bicycle every time we approached a herd; but though they looked so fierce, the beasts did not turn and rend me! As for Mr. Cubitt, he only laughed at my evolutions, and when I fell off asked gravely, "What is the matter with the bicycle?"

He, I may explain, went first to show me the way, and every now and then we had to turn off sharply into the bush along native paths. When he turned unexpectedly like this and I tried to follow, the consequences were again disastrous, and I measured my unlucky length on the road. However, he never looked round on these occasions, so I hope and believe

he was unconscious of my tumbles, after each of which I hastily remounted and rode rapidly after him, coming up alongside of him as though nothing at all had happened and starting a conversation which had nothing whatever to do with bicycles!

As we cycled forward we came in sight of two figures ahead of us, one a man, the other a woman, and drawing nearer to them I opened my eyes wide in astonishment as I recognised in the man one of my two model policemen! The rascal, who Mr. Cubitt had assured me would look after my porters, was certainly not thinking about porters at that moment, and I looked reproachfully at my host as we rode noiselessly nearer and nearer to the amorous couple.

Then the bicycle runner cried, "Make room for the Sahib!" and the culprit looked round with a start, all thoughts of love forsaking him as he recognised us. Mr. Cubitt had a few words to say to him, after which he sprinted away with a fine turn of speed, apparently intent upon getting to camp in record time.

"Don't you think that if he is going to look after the porters like that, he had better go back to Fort Portal?" I inquired mildly. But Mr. Cubitt would not hear of such a thing, and assured me that everything would be all right, and I need trouble about porters no more, now that the police were there to look after them.

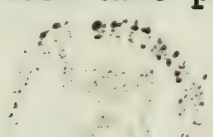
This sounded very nice, but I rode on, doubting, yes, even when we overtook the amorous policeman once more, this time urging on a number of my porters as though his very life depended upon getting them into camp in good time! I wondered

how long his efforts would continue, once we were out of sight. The answer came later!

After a two hours' ride we reached the hunters' camp and prepared for lunch. Still thinking about my porters, I ventured to suggest sending Thomas on ahead to my camp, with one of Mr. Cubitt's cold ducks and some bread and butter—this in case my gallant policeman met any particularly attractive lady on the road, who might possibly make him late in reaching camp. If this happened, there would at least be some cold supper for me, I explained. Mr. Cubitt did not seem to share my doubts about the policeman, but agreed readily to my suggestion, and Thomas was sent off with the duck. Then we had lunch.

It was a most lively function, and Mr. Russell amused us all by bemoaning his misfortunes, in which I could thoroughly sympathise with him. For he had ridden up part of the way from Kampala on a mule, and one day, getting careless, he had allowed the animal to throw him, after which it had bitten him in the knee. I related my own experiences with the mule on which I was to have ridden up Camaneola, and for the first time realised that perhaps it was the finger of Fate that deprived me of that animal. Mr. Russell agreed that this was so, and assured us that the bite of a mule is very painful; but he could not be allowed to have all the misery to himself when I still boasted a quinine abscess in the leg, so I took first place as martyr on this occasion!

I made an excellent lunch, and felt much better afterwards, in spite of the touching parting that must soon take place. The camp was close to the



road, and about half a mile from the forest whither my friends were bound. My own route, of course, lay along the road.

As it was now time to be getting on, I bade a tearful farewell to my three companions, and half-promised the Chief of Police I might return one day—but the others looked at him so fiercely I had to break off and turn it into a farewell for ever!

Thus I parted from three of the nicest men it has ever been my good fortune to meet; and I have met a good many. Indeed, I had not laughed so much for years as I did while in their company. But if I mention them particularly, it is not with any wish to ignore the other residents at Fort Portal, all of whom did whatever was in their power to make my stay there a pleasant one. How well they succeeded, and how much I enjoyed those five jolly weeks!

At parting, Captain Riddick reminded me that I was to use his house and everything in it, when I reached Kampala; and I thanked him greatly, and promised to do so. With this reminder, we parted, and I set out to cover the seventeen miles that lay between me and my camp.

The roads were not bad, and I rode forward at a steady pace, my bicycle boy running beside me, for some distance without incident. But presently we saw figures ahead, and soon came up with my amorous policeman, urging a number of porters forward with an energy that plainly told me they had been having a lengthy rest since last I saw them. Of course, they ought to have reached camp hours and hours before, but Mr. Cubitt had said "Don't worry," so I determined to follow his advice,

for the present at any rate. I therefore took no notice of the conscientious policeman and his friends, but rode on, leaving them to their own devices.

I got into camp about 6 p.m., and found the other policeman and a number of porters there, and my tent up. The kitchen was also in, but *no food.* Thomas glanced towards the monkeys and parrot suggestively. He liked me to have a hot dinner at night. Then—"Parrot make nice pigeon pie," he said. "Plenty people eat parrot!" But no, I could not be so unkind to my poor Polly, and, shaking my head, I replied, "Where duck?"

Thomas produced the cold duck and bread and butter, also some cocoa, and off these I supped, reflecting the while how it would have been a case of cocoa alone had I not foreseen what would happen. The meal came to an end, but there was still no sign of any more porters, so I had my bath and turned in, trusting to—the police!

Next morning I was awakened by Thomas, with a cup of cocoa and a letter from Mr. Cubitt, which Thomas told me had arrived the night before just after I had gone to bed, and two hours before the last of my porters put in an appearance. Mr. Cubitt must have written the letter at dinner-time and sent it in by a special runner, who, although he started hours after my porters, managed to beat them by the respectable margin of 120 minutes!

Thomas told me that all, save the kitchen and tent porters, had set out with the two policemen that morning at 3.30, and, "To-day," he added, "they will be in before you get there." This was indeed wonderful news, which I found it difficult

to believe, more particularly when he told me, "It is a long march to-day, Missisi. I make Irish stew last night, so we can stop and have blekifast on the way."

I dressed leisurely, and afterwards saw the kitchen and tent porters safely off; then, at about 9.30, I mounted my bicycle and rode slowly away. I had given the porters six hours' start, so there really did seem to be some remote chance of their getting into camp before me! To give them every possible opportunity, I rode particularly slowly, hoping that my luck was at last in.

It was a beautiful day of lovely sunshine, yet not too hot, and the road led me through lovely forest country, trees and bush bordering the road on either side. I rode thus for about an hour, attended only by my bicycle runner, when, happening to look up, I saw a sight that nearly made me fall off my machine with anger and mortification.

There on the roadside, sitting next to the porter who carried my dinner-box, was that infernal amorous policeman, chatting and smoking in the calmest manner possible. He did not appear at all concerned at seeing me come up, so I dismounted and, grasping my chicotte, which was slung on my wrist, asked him, through the bicycle boy, what he meant by not being on ahead with the other porters. He at once replied that he was tired and needed a rest (he had managed to cover three miles in something over six hours, poor fellow!). So I got the boy to threaten him with all sorts of fearful punishments when he reached camp that night; and although he knew well I would not dare to fulfil my threats, he did condescend to get up and go off at a good pace with his friend the porter.

I followed on slowly for a couple of hours, when I came upon Thomas preparing my luncheon under a tree. I got him to say a few kindly words to the policeman, who assured him that everything would be all right, and departed, thus protesting. Then I had my lunch, and afterwards read and smoked for a time, in order to give the men a chance of getting on with the kitchen and tent. Thomas also went on, leaving only the bicycle runner behind with me.

I remained here till about 2 p.m., when I mounted and continued my march, but still quite slowly, along the broad road.

This road is now the great caravan route to the Congo, and it is hoped to run motor 'buses from Kampala to the frontier. They were then running as far as Mubende, which is about half-way, but here, for some unknown reason, the 'buses invariably broke down and refused to budge another yard. One of these wonderful vehicles was to have met me at Fort Portal, but, alas! like all its fellows, it broke down at Mubende, and here I was on a bicycle, after all. Mr. Russell, too, had meant to travel to Fort Portal in one of them, and he, as you know, had been unluckier than I, for he had come by mule—the unkind brute that bit him!

Well, along this historic road I slowly progressed, and very pleased I was at not seeing any more porters, nor any sign of them. "This time," I told myself, "they really will be in before me!" And with this joyful thought in my mind, I sailed into camp about 4.30 p.m.

I saw before me a funny little bungalow, made of corrugated iron, raised from the ground upon six big posts, and with a flight of wooden steps leading up to

the door. I also saw *one* of my policemen and *some* of my porters. Where were the rest? Thomas quickly furnished the explanation. "Missisi sleep there to-night," he said, pointing to the bungalow. "Tentie not arrived yet, because porters know rest-house here, so think Missisi not want tentie. They resting in bush!"

Of course, I might have known better than to expect that lazy policeman and the other porters to be in. What they had done was to creep into the bush with their loads, light a small fire, and cook, eat, and enjoy themselves generally, while I, not seeing any sign of them, had ridden on under the delusion that they were in camp! This, from their point of view, was certainly a better dodge than the usual one, which consisted in leaving the packages by the roadside and creeping into the bush to "rest." When porters tried this game on me I used to dismount and go after them, to their great discomfort.

On the present occasion they had been considerate enough to bring in all the things I really wanted, so there was nothing to worry about, and I decided to leave them more or less to their own devices in future, provided they put in an appearance some time during the night.

I climbed up into the rest-house, and found it consisted of one large, clean room, from which I looked out on all sides upon a nice little garden full of vegetables. The clearing in which it stood was surrounded by a palissade, and outside this the porters slept, while within call of the rest-house was a kitchen where Thomas would sleep.

I had some tea, and then visited the monkeys and

parrot. The policeman I found engaged in completing Polly's education. Just then the capito came up and suggested that I should buy a sheep, so that there would be meat for the men. This struck me as an excellent idea, as it would be a reward for those who had come into camp, and when the others heard what they had missed they would be very wild with themselves for not marching properly.

He therefore went off to look for the animal and other provisions, and presently several sheep arrived for me to choose from, together with some eggs and a couple of chickens. I picked out the animal that looked fattest, and paid 2½ rupees (3s. 6d.) for it. Then I told the capito to tell the men that if they walked well and got into camp before me they should have meat every night, for I thought 3s. 6d. a cheap price to pay for this object.

The sheep was cut up and divided amongst the porters, every one being contented. This division of the meat to everybody's satisfaction always struck me as being quite a work of art, and I often wondered how a European butcher would have come through the ordeal of dividing a sheep up into thirty or forty equal portions. The native's favourite "tit-bit," I may here say, consists of the entrails, which he eats raw! This was always too much for me, and when my porters wished to indulge their taste in that direction I used to make them take the feast away into the bush, where they could enjoy themselves out of my sight.

I was greatly delighted that night when the rest of the porters arrived at nine o'clock and found every scrap of meat eaten up. I felt I was getting a bit of my own back out of them, and with this comforting

reflection to soothe me, enjoyed a very peaceful night's rest.

Next morning I awoke at 9 a.m. and whistled for Thomas, who informed me that all the porters had gone on hours before; but having now cast aside all care about porters, I determined to banish them from my mind, and turned my attention to the breakfast of scrambled eggs and tomatoes from the garden which Thomas had prepared for me. He also told me he had been making tomato soup over night for my lunch that day, so having made a good breakfast, I started off with my bicycle boy to do the short march of about fifteen miles which lay between me and Matiri.

But though the march was short it was a very hilly one, and I spent a good deal of the time walking while the boy pushed my machine. At the top of the hills I would mount and coast down, and the first time I prepared to do this I got a great shock.

I was just mounting when I saw my boy make a dash for the side of the road, and "Oho," I thought, "you're going to desert!" At once I dropped my cycle and rushed after him, meaning to grab him and drag him back. But quick as I was he was quicker, and before you could say "Knife!" he had slipped down a steep bank and disappeared completely in the thick bush. It was, I knew, quite useless to follow such an agile youth through the bush, so I returned sadly to my machine. I did not know the way to camp, and was now quite alone; but one must trust to luck on such occasions, and I determined to go on riding straight ahead, as I was bound to reach somewhere some time.

So I remounted and set off, spinning downhill

as gaily as though I knew just where I was going. Presently there came a bend in the road, and whirling round this I flew down the last bit of the hill, and so reached the bottom. And here, by the side of the road, sat my bicycle boy, grinning and showing a set of very nice white teeth !

He started to explain matters very rapidly, but as I could not understand a word he said, that did not advance things much. However, I smiled at him, and then we went on again till we reached the top of the next hill, when he once more slid down into the bush, only to reappear at the bottom, which he again reached before me, although I had coasted all the way.

When we reached camp I asked the capito how the young man managed to do his disappearing trick so neatly. The capito replied, " He knows all the native paths through the bush and all the short cuts. When the Mem Sahib goes quickly downhill on her bicycle he cannot keep up on the road, but he can get before her by going the short cuts through the bush."

That was a red-letter day, for when I got into camp there were *all* the porters, squatting round awaiting my arrival. The sheep of the night before had worked a miracle !

As I rode up there was a great clapping of hands, and I noticed that not only was my tent up, but several sheep had been brought in, and were there ready to be bought. While I was asking the price, which turned out to be the same as at the last camp, I heard a shout from Thomas, and, turning round, saw that one of my monkeys was loose. He made straight for a bunch of onions, and after

securing his booty ran back to his companions, with whom he shared the dainties. I had never before realised that the creatures were so fond of onions, and had therefore never given them any ; but after that night they were given some as a treat occasionally, although I could not allow them near me afterwards !

Having duly purchased one of the sheep, it was killed and cut up, and each man came up in turn to take his share. I noticed how the porters who had not been in the night before did their best to get the largest pieces. But they did not succeed. When every man had got his piece, they all sat down and clapped their hands, as a token of their gratitude to me. Whereupon I told them to show their gratitude by marching well, and that they could go off now and get their dinner ready, an order which they obeyed readily enough.

It seemed to me that now I had at last solved the problem of how to make lazy porters march, and I indulged in bright visions of their being in thus every night for the remainder of my march.

Despite this comforting reflection, I did not sleep well that night. Hyenas and other wild animals made the darkness hideous with their noise, and not having had any desire to pay £80 for a shooting licence, I could not kill any of them, so remained in bed like a philosopher. The porters kicked up their usual hullaballoo, shouting lustily to drive away the animals, and after what seemed to be hours of this performance, silence reigned once more, and I fell asleep.

By the time I was up next day the porters had already left camp, and later I set out, as usual, with

my bicycle boy. We had not been going very far when he pointed to a number of porters coming towards us with loads on their backs. There must have been two hundred or three hundred of them, and joyous visions of the champagne I was looking out for floated through my mind as I rode towards them.

It is true that when I got near I noticed that the goods were all marked "Congo," and upon inquiring, found the men were going up to Kassendi with stores, ammunition, and many cases which seemed to contain whisky. It does not do to take too much on trust, however, in this wicked world, so I determined to make quite sure that my champagne was not in the cases. I thought the Congo mark might be simply bluff, for it seemed to me incredible that the English authorities could possibly allow so many porters to go all alone into the Congo, where "atrocities" are so dreadfully rife.

I therefore summoned the carriers to stand while I investigated the whisky question, or, in other words, had some of the cases opened. Some of the men strongly objected, while others regarded it as rather a good joke, but though I searched thoroughly, no champagne could I discover. Needless to say, in this and all similar instances, I always wrote a "chit" explaining who had opened the boxes and why it had been done, as I naturally did not want to get the men into a row.

Further on we came upon some more porters sitting over a fire, smoking or sleeping, and after again looking vainly for Mr. Cubitt's stores, we passed on, and presently overtook my capito. I reminded him about the champagne, and told him

to annex any that was addressed to Fort Portal, which he promised to do; but, alas! nothing like champagne came in view that day.

I reached camp earlier than usual that day, namely, about 3 p.m., and found the faithful Thomas busily engaged in laundry operations. He had had the bath filled with water at an adjacent stream and carried up to camp, together with as many bottles and other vessels as he could find. When I came up he was washing out a suit of my khaki shooting clothes, and exclaimed when he saw me, "To-morrow Sunday! Missisi must have clean clothes." Here came in the Mission training.

I told him to make me a cup of tea, but we discovered, to our dismay, that one of the boxes had either been rifled or else had had some of its contents jerked out *en route*, for neither pepper, salt, nor sugar could we find.

I knew I was only about four miles from Mubende, where Mr. Jackson, a friend of Mr. Cubitt, was District Commissioner, so I wrote a "chit," asking if he could help me with a few supplies, and sent it up to his house. As a matter of fact, Mr. Jackson was then away on *safari*, but my messenger saw another European, the Telegraph official, whom he told about my lack of provisions. This gentleman at once did his best to help me, and two hours after setting out my boy returned laden with all kinds of nice things which this extremely kind man had provided from his own house.

Here was a very good instance of the generous spirit of hospitality which reigns throughout Uganda and British East Africa. The man who sent me these supplies did not know me from Adam, had

never seen me in his life, but hearing that I wanted stores was enough for him, and he sent me not only what I needed, but everything else he could think of. I think it was very charming of him to do so.

At this camp many native women came in to see me, and, incidentally, I think, to see the monkeys as well. What they thought of me I do not know, but they were obviously delighted with the monkeys, which they fed with bananas. They brought me eggs and bananas, and then asked for medicine, so I proceeded to investigate their little ailments, which I treated to the best of my ability, and at the conclusion of the ceremony I told Thomas to tell them that my charge would be five rupees each for attending them. They received the announcement with loud laughter and much clapping of hands, as much as to say, "Good joke!" and I could not help thinking how exciting life would be in civilised countries if the people of, say, London treated their creditors in such light-hearted fashion. When they had thoroughly enjoyed the jest they went off, and I went to bed.

CHAPTER XV

THE HOME TRAIL

NEXT morning I left Mubende with my capito and bicycle boy, but when we came to a nice-looking hill I left them behind and began coasting down. When I had gone a short distance I was very much frightened at seeing a big lion not twenty yards from the road, carrying a water-buck in its mouth, upon which I released the brakes and flew by just as quickly as possible. I don't know whether the beast saw me; but I rode on at top speed for several miles, and then, having looked round to make sure there was no hungry lion on my track, ventured to dismount for a rest.

I had been sitting by the roadside for about a quarter of an hour, when my bicycle runner and the capito hove in sight—also at top speed! When they came up and found me safe and smiling, they fell on their knees, with much clapping of hands. They had, of course, seen the lion, after losing sight of me, and the capito explained that he thought I was perhaps killed: hence the hand-clapping at finding me safe and sound.

After this little adventure we continued our march, still keeping a sharp look-out for those stores; but

although we stopped numerous porters, not one of them was bound for Fort Portal.

At Nabukazi the water was very bad; but as I had not been warned against it, and the porters seemed to be enjoying it, I got Thomas to boil some for tea. It was a case of Hobson's choice, for there was nothing else to drink, and I tried to believe that if the porters could drink the stuff I could too. As a matter of fact, natives seem to be able to drink anything with impunity, and the present occasion was no exception to the rule, for they suffered no ill effects afterwards. With me, alas! things were different, and two days later I was in the grips of dysentery. I continued to press forward, however, as the water continued bad, and to have halted would have been fatal. How I longed for that champagne! but never a sign of it did we see, so there was nothing for it but to keep boiling the water thoroughly before drinking it.

I now determined to increase the pace by doubling the marches—a difficult undertaking, considering what a good-for-nothing ruffian one of the policemen was. But if he was bad, the other man was good —always in camp when I arrived, and ready to take my boots away and clean them—a complete contrast to his indolent comrade. This being so, it seemed to me the double march might be accomplished by means of a little strategy, and I therefore sent the idle policeman on early with the porters, and got the good one to start much later, so that he could act as whipper-in. Before they set out, I promised the men meat that night if they marched well and reached camp before me. Then I sent them off in the order arranged.

Marvellous to relate, they actually did accomplish the double march that day, and when I reached camp, there they all were, waiting for the promised meat. I gave them another sheep as a reward, and told them I wanted them to do another double march on the following day. Next morning I got them off very early, and then at about nine o'clock set out myself, having decided to have breakfast at a rest-house some three miles further on. I got in about ten o'clock, feeling very cheap, and there, to my horror and disgust, found the "Lazy One," with all the porters squatting round him! I had made a mistake in allowing the good policeman to travel with me as far as here, my idea being that he was to push forward while I was breakfasting and keep the men moving.

I demanded an explanation, and the porters said they had gone half-way towards the next camp, when the policeman had stopped them and brought them back, saying they were to stop here. I was furious, and had them up and off again in double-quick time, with fresh promises of torment for the amorous policeman. Then I set the other man on their track, and, hoping for the best, turned my attention to breakfast.

I saw nothing more of them during the day, and found a fresh surprise in store for me that night. To vary the monotony of the proceedings, they marched miles *past* the camp, to a native village, where there was beer to be had, and here I found them when I rode up, weary and ill, at 8 p.m.!

This was a brilliant idea (from their point of view), and they were already quite comfortable when I arrived, and busy eating. There was no accommo-

dation of any kind for me; but they had not thought of that, so I had to remind them. I made them clear me a place in the bush where my tent could be erected, and by the time they had done so I was too weary and ill to care about anything but sleep. I did manage to breathe terrible threats of punishment to come if they were not up and off early next morning. Then I took a stiff dose of brandy and turned in, leaving them to their dissipation.

I was lucky enough to get a good night's rest, and felt much better in the morning when I awoke. The men had all gone on, I was glad to find, but they had left one of my monkeys behind, dead. How this happened I never could find out, though I did my best; but I held the man who had been carrying it responsible, and he got some medicine in due course.

During the day's march I passed all the porters except Thomas and the kitchen boy, which meant that, at any rate, I should find tea awaiting me when I reached camp. I got in early, and my hopes were not in vain, for there were Thomas and the boy in front of a large fire, with a big block of wood some yards away to serve as a seat and tea-table combined.

Poor Thomas, how he let himself go about the porters and their laziness! His broken English and fluent Swahili beggared description, and I had to sit hurriedly on the ground and remain there until my laughter had somewhat abated, for I was too weak to stand these sudden shocks. When he had finished with the porters he began to lecture me in his quaint fatherly way.

"Missisi," he said, "when damned porters arrive with tent and clothes, you must take all off now

you've got on, and to-day all shall help wash clothes. Missisi arrive to-morrow Kampala beautiful and clean then! Thomas know Missisi very sick, but she soon be in nice house all by herself, stay plenty in bed, and get well before go to Mombasa." Then he added, as a sort of after-thought, "Would the Bibi like Thomas to go with her to England?"

"But, Thomas," I replied, "what about your wife at Blantyre?"

"Oh, that all right," he answered promptly; "Missisi bought plenty clothes and beads for her; I send her money to buy cows and goats; she then rich woman, and I go back to her plenty years from now. Shall I go with Missisi?"

"No, Thomas," I said. "You go back to gentleman in Congo. Missisi come back soon, then Thomas shall be with her again." For he had agreed to go back to Lieutenant Delattre.

At this point the porters began to arrive, and, to my disgust, I found that my lazy policeman had allowed all my chickens to escape; so I had perforce to buy a sheep, from which I cut what I needed for myself and Thomas, distributing the remainder amongst the villagers, greatly to the disappointment of the porters.

I turned in very early, and from my open tent watched Thomas and a number of the porters at work on the laundry. It was a regular clean-up, and my khaki suits, stockings, pyjamas, sheets, &c., &c., were soon hanging on a line across the camp, which looked more like a laundry yard than anything else. Then they tackled the saucepans and household utensils, and the noise of the washers intermingled with shouts at the monkeys as they grabbed

everything within reach added greatly to the amusement of the ceremony. But how tired out I felt, and how I longed to reach Kampala and sleep in a house once more!

The porters had gone on by the time I awoke next morning, and after breakfast Thomas suggested that he should take a photo of me standing in front of the tent, with my bicycle and a policeman on either side. I agreed, and let him have his own way when he insisted on focussing the camera, &c. Alas! when the picture was developed all that could be seen were the wheels of the bike and the lower part of my own and the policeman's legs!

As soon as the wonderful picture was taken I mounted my machine and started off for Kampala, a distance of fifteen miles, but it seemed a hundred. I had been riding about three-quarters of an hour when I espied in the distance a man and woman coming towards me, pushing their bicycles, so I dismounted and waited until they reached me. They seemed very much inclined to pass by without even a "good morning," in true insular English style, but I was just dying for a glass of champagne if one was to be had, so I smiled sweetly upon the gentleman.

He was, I judged, travelling with his daughter, a girl in a long cloth skirt, with her hair hanging down her back, apparently about seventeen. I nearly dropped my machine on to the road when he told me he and *his wife* were going to Fort Portal. They looked quite shocked at my appearance—the knickerbockers were evidently too much for their sense of propriety—but I did not care, as I knew I looked *clean!* Without actually asking, I hinted that half a pint of champagne would be the making of me,

but it was "no go," so I bade them a cheerful good morning, and sailed off.

Presently I met their porters, *carrying wines of every description*, the contents of each case being labelled on the outside in large letters. How my mouth watered, and how I longed to open a case and take what I needed! But I overcame the temptation, and rode on, trying to imagine what it must feel like to be a really *mean* person. When I told this little anecdote, later on at Kampala, every one said I ought to have helped myself, until I felt quite sorry for not having done so.

As it was, I rode on, stopping a dozen times to drink water by the roadside. I felt my old enemy was upon me, and rode as fast as the hills would permit. I knew I must be near Kampala, and wanted to try some short cuts, but my bicycle boy would not hear of it. He had vivid and painful recollections of certain short cuts I had taken on previous occasions, which resulted in our finding ourselves several miles out of our course. I therefore followed his advice, and soon found myself riding into Kampala, very hot and oh, so tired!

I soon saw a couple of white men standing on the steps of a big trading store, so I rode up and asked them the way to Captain Riddick's house, and, incidentally, for a drink. One of them said he had some soda-water. "Anything to put in it?" I asked. "Some whisky, if you like," he replied. So then and there I tasted the first whisky and soda which I had ever consumed in my life. To be strictly honest, I had *two*.

Seeing I was about fagged out, my new friends asked me to lunch with them, promising to get me

a rickshaw and take me to Captain Riddick's house, which was on the hill, afterwards. While we were lunching Thomas came in and said, "Missisi, two gentlemen in policeman's house. What will Missisi do?" I said, "Go back and turn them out, Thomas!" But he replied, "They been there already several days, and another coming to-day, but room for you!" I had not expected to find any one else in the house, and the sudden prospect of being looked after by three men was somewhat overwhelming. However, the traveller must take things as they come, and so, after lunch, up to the house I went in a rickshaw, and found that the wife of another police official, Captain Lawrence, had prepared everything for my comfort. I met the two young men at tea that afternoon, and found that one of them had been to Fort Portal and knew Mr. Cubitt. He told me to ask his boy for anything I wanted, and explained that it was only a bachelor establishment, &c.

After tea I received a letter from the wife of the Provincial Commissioner, asking me up to dinner, but not having any pretty frocks, I thought it well to explain this fact in my reply, adding that, although I had no clothes, I would come as respectably dressed as possible. It was a very cheery dinner party, and there was quite a number of guests present. They all seemed very much astonished when they heard how I had come through the Congo alone, and showed great interest in the particulars of my journey. My hostess was very kind, and asked me to make use of her house whenever I liked. After dinner I went back to my new quarters and straight to bed, feeling very seedy.

Next morning I still felt rather "cheap," and experienced a peculiar sensation in one of my eyes, but attributing this to one of the monkeys having put his little paw in while playing, I thought no more about it just then. Not having met any of the stores, and knowing how short Mr. Cubitt was, I wrote out a list of the things which I knew he wanted and sent Thomas out to get them, not forgetting to include a stick of shaving soap, which amused him very much when he received it. Thomas was to take the purchases back to Fort Portal on his way to the Congo.

That same day I received a letter from Mr. Cubitt, giving me some interesting details of the elephant hunt which he and his two friends had undertaken. One day Mr. Russell and Captain Riddick went out after elephant while Mr. Cubitt took a walk by himself some distance from the camp. While strolling along, wrapt in contemplation, Mr. Cubitt heard a sudden noise behind him, and, looking round, discovered to his horror that he was being pursued by an elephant. He had no rifle with him, and the elephant evidently meant business, so there was nothing for it but to bolt. And bolt he did—round bushes, over bushes, into bushes, behind trees, and zig-zag through the bush—for his very life, with the great brute thundering behind him. While he ran he shouted with all the energy of despair, and so lusty were his yells that soon the whole camp was roused, and came out, giving tongue like a pack of hounds. That did the trick. The elephant was a self-respecting animal, and he could not stand the noise of the native porters. He turned tail and fled. Mr. Cubitt, who was a bit of a runner when a boy,

assured me that he had never run so fast before in his life, and added that the most painful part of the performance came when he returned to camp and proceeded to get the thorns out of his legs. "And," concluded his letter pathetically, "I was not even looking for elephant!"

I was to continue my journey on Tuesday, and upon the Monday night I went out to dine with a friend of Mr. Cubitt's. After dinner the conversation turned on banks and bankers, which led me to relate a funny incident that had recently befallen me. A draft had been sent me to a certain bank at Mombasa, and when it reached me at Fort Portal on the back was written—

"Lady Left the Country."
"Will be back in few days."
"Not Known."

It appeared to have been through the hands of several members of the staff, who had thus expressed their views on my whereabouts. I added that it seemed to me an extremely careless way of dealing with an open money draft; and what a nice thing it would have been for me if the document had been lost!

At this a little Scotsman, whom I did not know, flew into a fearful rage, and declared that such things ought to be told in private and not at a bridge-table. As he was losing a few rupees to me, I put his temper down to that, and when I retired, left him the money as a present, which did not tend to soothe him! He was, as a matter of fact, manager of a branch of the same bank at Kampala, and had just come out with his bride.

I felt extremely sorry for her! She was a charming woman, and appeared to be on tenter-hooks while her husband gave vent to his bilious temper.

On Tuesday afternoon, the day of my departure, I went up to the Provincial Commissioner's house to have tea, and here I met several people who were going by the same boat across Lake Victoria Nyanza. After tea we went down to the quay, where I found Thomas waiting with all my luggage. There was a great fuss about my tusks; the railway people who run the boats and trains as well do not forget to charge top price for carrying ivory, and even then will not hold themselves responsible for its safety *en route*. I had to pay enormously, but at last managed to get everything on board, monkeys and parrot included.

Here I had to bid Thomas farewell, and I am not ashamed to confess that there were tears in my eyes when I came to part with the faithful boy to whose unswerving devotion I owed my life. Even then I had but to say the word and he would have continued to follow me through thick and thin. "When Missisi come back to Africa," he said simply, "she send for Thomas and he come back to her. Wherever she go Thomas go too." So I bade goodbye to one of the whitest black men I have ever met—or ever shall meet.

The next I heard of Thomas was from Mr. Cubitt, who wrote and told me of the boy's arrival at Fort Portal, and how anxious he was to remain there. It scarcely seemed to be playing the game, however, to keep him, after his previous promise to Lieutenant Delattre. Mr. Cubitt therefore sent him back to

the Congo, and only the other day I received this letter from him :—

April 30/4/1911
NYA LUKEMBA
POST OFICE

DEARST MISS M. ROBEY,—Goodnighte If you are welle I am very gladenss Indeed please Miss I tell you that I rech to Mr. A. Delattere I Receive my money please I am very plesed very very much to receive my plesant Indeed

I am Your Boy
C. K. THOMAS.

Having seen the last of my devoted boy, I turned to investigate my quarters on board, and quickly discovered that there were none! I mean the steamer was so crowded that no berth had been allotted to me, so I saw the captain and asked if I had to sleep on deck. He was a very nice man, and eventually he managed to get a couple of English officers to give up their cabin to me, they taking the cabin of a ship's officer who happened to be away on leave. I was naturally extremely grateful to them for their courtesy and kindness in thus turning out for my convenience.

We had a delightful crossing to Jinja, where we took rickshaws and rode out to look at Ripon Falls and the source of the Nile. My eyes were smarting, but I paid no attention to them, thinking it might be owing to the dust. At the Falls there were some people fishing, and I took a photograph of them, although I looked in vain to see them catch anything. Then we drove round to Hippo Pool, where again my luck was out, for I stood there half an hour looking for hippo, and never saw the sign of one! Then we went back to the boat.

I felt ill that evening, so turned in early and soon

Ripon Falls, the source of the Nile.

fell asleep. How long I slept I don't know, but suddenly I woke up, with my heart thumping madly. I felt there was something the matter, but could not tell what it was, so put out my hand and switched on the electric light. Still it was dark. What had happened? Had the light gone wrong? Filled with a growing dread of I scarce knew what, I fumbled for my electric torch, found it, and turned it on. Still all was dark!

Then an agony of horror gripped my heart, more bitter and fearful than anything I had before known. My faculties were numbed—I was paralysed with terror—while the horrible knowledge of my position slowly forced itself upon my throbbing brain. Filled with impotent despair, I sat there, alone, in darkness, trying to realise the awful thing that had befallen me—knowing that *I was blind!*

How can I describe the fierce tumult of varied emotions that rushed through my distracted brain during the awful moments which followed? I seemed to spend a lifetime of agony as I crouched there in that hateful, impenetrable darkness! Fear, complete and demoralising, descended on me like a palsy, and then a sense of wild despair, so that I wished that I had died of fever in the distant bush——

For who can tell to what red hell his sightless soul shall stray?

The words rang through my aching temples like a hateful clang of bells, and I prayed for death—for an end to all this torture. . . .

The agony was too much. I could sit still no longer. I must find relief somehow. I called out again and again, my cry that of the most helpless creature upon earth—the cry of the blind!

A lady passenger came in to see what the matter was. She was kind and sympathetic, and did all she could for me; but what could any one do for me just then? There was no doctor on board. The weary hours of that dreadful night dragged slowly by, and daylight—which was no daylight to me—at last arrived. A dull despair hung upon me when the lady again visited my cabin, bringing a lotion in which to bathe my eyes.

I bathed them, hoping against hope, and presently a tiny ray of light became visible to my left eye! That was all; bathe as I would, no further improvement took place, so with this I had to be content; but it was something. They bandaged my forehead, a peculiar part of my case being that my eyes showed no sign of blindness, although they felt as though bound in an iron winch. Every one was very kind to me during the two days' voyage to Port Florence, but I was wild with misery, and cannot hope to describe the mental torment that I then endured.

At Port Florence the doctor came down and examined me, but said there was nothing to be done, as my blindness had resulted from the terrible attacks of fever through which I had passed. He said I must get down to Mombasa, and from thence to England as soon as possible; but I was too desperate to leave any stone unturned, so had a wire sent to the Government doctor at Nairobi to meet the train by which I was to travel.

He did meet the train, but assured me he could do nothing except give me a little cocaine to deaden the pains in my head. He was a very kind man, and went off and bought me some cigarettes with which

to pass the weary hours that must elapse before I reached Mombasa.

I missed all the beautiful sights which we passed on our journey through this wonderful game country—the country that Roosevelt saw from the foot-plate of an engine. Indeed, to add to my other troubles, I went down with fever on the train, and arrived at Mombasa a veritable wreck.

I had wired to the Metropole, asking them to send some one down to meet me and look after my luggage, and was met by one of the proprietors; but his ideas of helping a three-quarter blind invalid consisted of smoking a cigarette and staring at me as though I were a new addition to some zoological garden. I therefore got a porter to guide me to one of the trolleys which are so largely used in Mombasa, and in this I was pushed to the hotel. As for the Staring One, I left him to his own devices, hoping that when he could see me no longer he might perhaps turn his attention to the question of getting my luggage.

On the following morning, which was Monday, I sent for the agent of the *Messageries Maritimes*, to arrange about getting back to England. The gentleman, whose name was M. Ruinart, came at once to see me, and told me he would book me a cabin on a boat which would leave in about a week. I was so ill that day I sent for a doctor, who advised me to go into the Government hospital immediately. I did so, M. Ruinart attending to all my luggage and doing everything he could for my comfort; in fact, all the time I was at Mombasa this gentleman and his wife were kindness personified to me.

The pain in my eyes, fever, and sleeplessness combined to make me partly delirious at times, and I fear

I caused the doctor some perturbation of mind; at any rate, he took my bottle of veronal from me, probably fearing that I might take too large a dose. He did not know what a charmed life I possess!

M. Ruinart and his wife came nearly every day to see me at the hospital, and while I was there they were kind enough to take care of my monkeys and parrot for me. When the day arrived for me to go on board the boat, this kind Frenchman sent his own trolley to take me down to the quay, and saw to all my luggage, even going so far as to have a case of small bottles of champagne sent on board for me.

I think the doctor was glad to get me out of the hospital, and I sympathised with him. He gave me a certain amount of good advice, and some injections of quinine to take with me. A nurse came with me from the hospital, helped me on board, and saw me safely to my cabin, with careful instructions to the ship's doctor as to what was to be done for me. Needless to say, I went straight to bed, and so began my return voyage to England!

I soon began to cheer up when I found that as the fever began to leave me my left eye gradually got better, and in a few days' time I could actually see quite well out of it. The right one, however, still remained quite sightless.

When we reached Jubuti I was up and feeling much stronger; the fever had quite left me, and now I only had the right eye bandaged. Here the wife of a man who had been British Consul in the Congo came on board, and we became acquainted.

She was very much interested when she heard I had come from the Congo, and told me the following story, which, she said, her husband vouched for,

and which (she alleged) took place while he was in the Congo, near Boma, on the West Coast.

One day a Belgian official, while out on *safari*, came to a river, and not wishing to wet his feet, summoned a number of his porters and their wives to him, had their heads chopped off, and placed them in the river as stepping-stones for him to cross by. She added that her husband had reported this story to the British Government.

I suggested that it would have been much easier for the Belgian to have done what the chiefs used to do in Fiji, namely, to make the men and women lie down and form a human bridge, as it seemed perfectly ridiculous to me that a person should try to balance on human heads, according to her story.

She told me a few somewhat similar yarns, but when I asked, " Did your husband know the officials concerned ? Did he make inquiries ? Did he see any of these things happen ? " she could only reply that he had *heard* of them. That was his proof ! And I fear I lost her friendship when I suggested that her husband would have been better employed if he had looked into things that were fact, not fiction. These tales, which it is so easy to repeat, must have been like those of another British official at Elizabethville, who actually wrote a book on the Congo, founded too much on hearsay, and bristling with " I heard " this, that, or the other, instead of " I went and investigated " it.

So I parted from the lady of the " severed heads " somewhat coldly, and the voyage was resumed. Nothing at all exciting happened, and at Marseilles I left the boat, and took the overland route home.

When I arrived in London I weighed 6 st. 13 lbs., which shows what fever will do for one ; while three months later my weight was 10 st. 5 lbs., and I could see out of both eyes once more. So " All's well that ends well ! "

CHAPTER XVI

THE CONGO AND ITS CRITICS

I HAVE already explained how my attention was first directed to the Congo, namely, by the perusal of certain books in which the writers purported to set forth the state of things obtaining there at the present time under Belgian rule. Like thousands of other people, I was horrified at what I read, and therefore very readily grasped the opportunity of visiting that country.

There are numerous ways of visiting a strange land, and five or six months spent after the manner of the ordinary tourist might well be considered an insufficient period in which to learn very much about the actual conditions under which its inhabitants live. I did not go as an ordinary tourist, however, but by wandering slowly through remote districts was able to observe the everyday life of the population with whom I was brought into daily contact in connection with the many necessities of everyday existence.

A glance at the map included in this volume will serve to show just where I entered the Katanga, and how I passed from thence right through to the Lado Enclave; and on the strength of this journey I think

I am fully entitled to write about the conditions under which the natives of these districts live at the present day. I write of what I actually saw. Can all Congo scribes say the same ?

The British public has already formed very definite opinions about the Congo and its administration—how could it be otherwise, in face of the literature that has been published in this connection ? So startling a picture has been drawn that it would be outraging all traditions to write about the Congo in any but the approved strain, and the person who would dare otherwise must work under the grave handicap of public prejudice.

To contradict the "authorities," some of whom, by the way, have never, I believe, been in the Congo, is to lay oneself open to the charge of "whitewashing," of being an Anglophobe, and Heaven knows what else.

Let me therefore state here definitely and once for all that I wish to whitewash no one, that I am not an Anglophobe, that I visited the Congo with the primary object of seeing with my own eyes the horrors that have been reported, and that I fully expected to see them. More than this, I intend (D.V.) to pay another visit to the country, when I shall again trek from village to village, as before, but this time through fresh districts. Meanwhile I speak of the country that I have seen, and compare the facts of the case with the statements and inferences advanced by anti-Congolese writers.

Turning to one of the latest books * from this source, we find at the foot of the Introduction the

* "Great Britain and the Congo," by E. D. Morel, with an Introduction by Sir A. Conan Doyle (1909).

date September, 1909, and we must bear this date well in mind when considering the statements contained between its covers. I entered the Congo nine months after this date—namely, in June, 1910. Now let us see what the anti-Congolese have to say about conditions of life in the autumn of 1909 and what I found in the Katanga in the summer of 1910:—

> All the tortures of the Inquisition . . . are as child's play compared with the deeds of the Belgians in the Congo. . . . From every part of it, from the Lado Enclave, from the Katanga . . . from points two thousand miles apart, comes exactly the same tale of systematic bloodshed. "Systematic," that is the horror of it.

Thus the eminent gentleman who writes the Introduction. Here is no mincing of words, no hedging, but a direct indictment of Belgian administration all over the Congo. If he had confined his statement to certain districts it would ill become me to question his accuracy until I had visited those districts; but here we have mention made of the Katanga and the Lado Enclave, where I have actually been; and after reading such statements in connection with these districts, I find it difficult to put my amazement into words.

If this "systematic bloodshed" was going on in 1909, are we to believe that no trace of it could be found in 1910? Remember, I was looking for it, and, what is more, the Belgian officials did not know that I was looking for it. The authorities were utterly unprepared for my coming; so much so that when they heard from natives how a white woman was travelling through the bush, they generally refused to credit such a thing, consider-

ing it a hoax until they actually saw me. Sometimes, even when I sent on word to say I was coming, they refused to believe my messengers, and made no preparations for my reception. From this it can be readily understood how I managed to see the real conditions of ordinary life, both amongst white men and blacks, during my long trek through the Congo.

There is no systematic bloodshed in the Katanga to-day, and that a responsible writer should commit himself to statements that can be construed otherwise is, in my opinion, a very deplorable action on his part. If he is writing of things that took place many years ago, why does he not say so? Is it fair to rake up such things and cast them in the teeth of a friendly Power? Might not Belgium as well rake up the Penal Laws passed by England against the Irish Catholics in days gone by, but now long since repealed?

When we read of the ill-treatment of these poor people [natives], the horrible beatings, the mutilation of limbs, the butt-endings, the starving in hostage-houses—facts which are vouched for by witnesses of several nations and professions, backed by the incorruptible evidence of the Kodak—we again ask by what right are these things done?

Another extract from the same Introduction. Here we begin to get details—mutilation and starving in hostage-houses, for instance. Now, I would like to know the exact meaning of a "hostage-house," for although any one reading the above would conclude that hostage-houses are a recognised institution in the Congo, I never heard the words mentioned while I was in the country, and never saw one of these mysterious places. I inspected two

prisons, and saw the prisoners inside—one was at Uvira and the other at Nya Lukemba—and I can only say that both were well regulated, while the captives were obviously not suffering from any form of ill-treatment. They worked in gangs at the posts, under police, who carried rifles, but even the wildest sentimentalist could hardly object to such a precaution, I imagine.

As for the "incorruptible evidence of the Kodak," it is obvious that such evidence is strictly limited in its scope, if honourably employed. I mean to say that from the photograph of a mutilated person you can only deduce the fact that the person in question has suffered according to the picture. *Where* the crime was committed is quite another matter, and unless a very careful record be kept as to where such photographs are taken, it is almost inevitable that mistakes and misunderstandings will arise. Exactly the same remarks apply to the question of *When* was the crime depicted committed? and even the most honourable men may be misled on this score when they have not taken the photographs themselves.

I took my own camera with me, and all my photographs were taken either by myself, Thomas, or some person who happened to be with me at the time. I had fully intended to take photographs of Congo mutilations, and I could have obtained photographs of mutilated persons—*but not in the Congo.* But how easy it would have been to take such pictures and then to have applied them to the Katanga! It seems to me that the date and place of every photograph should be clearly ascertained before such evidence is considered reliable in a case where a nation's honour is concerned.

And now we have touched this subject of mutilation, it is as well to throw as much light on the question as possible. Every one who has been in Central Africa knows that mutilation is one of the results of tribal warfare, but the fact that natives are sometimes mutilated in districts where white men rule is usually shirked by writers on this subject. Naturally none of us like to bring unjust accusations against men of our own colour (or at least we *ought* not to like to do so); at the same time, it is well to understand how these things do happen occasionally.

The explanation is simple enough. A white man in a tropical country sometimes falls a victim to drug-taking or the drink habit, and in the case of an official, when this happens, discipline amongst his black subordinates at once relaxes. Nobody can deny that the black man is often cruel, and the black armed with a little authority, under white government, is no exception to the rule. As the European attends less and less to his duties, his black subordinates take more and more licence, using their official position to enforce the demands they make upon their unfortunate fellow-countrymen. Thus we see that mutilation is always a question of Black against Black, and not White *v.* Black, as the sentimentalist is prone to imagine. The white man does not mutilate natives to-day, whatever he did in days gone by; but by allowing his black police or soldiers to get out of hand, he will always be subjecting the native population to grave risk in this direction.

Passing from mutilation to the question of how natives should be punished, one must remember that where black races are concerned mere imprison-

ment is practically useless as a punishment. Beating is the only thing a native fears, just as the garrotters feared the cat alone. It were idle to deny that the natives of the Congo are a lazy and slovenly race, much more so than the blacks of any other country which I have visited, and I have been in pretty well every corner of the globe. Meat is the one delicacy which they love, and yet they are too lazy to get it for themselves. Promise them meat and they will usually march well, but woe to the traveller who cannot supply them with this! He will be deserted at any time, anywhere. Those supposedly poor, downtrodden natives, whom we have all read about, are very different in the flesh, and they would have deserted me a hundred times during my trip through the Congo had I not carried a chicotte which they knew my boy could wield to some purpose.

We turn to the Treaty which regulates the situation "All the Powers . . . pledge themselves to watch over the preservation of the native populations and the improvement of their moral and material conditions of existence." And this pledge . . . has never been rescinded.

Let us take the last statement first, and retort. Why should it be? The Belgians are doing everything possible for the welfare of the natives. The missionaries are granted land wherever it is asked for, to build their missions, and if there was anything shameful to hide about Congo administration, be sure the missionaries would not be slow to tell us.

How is it that the English and foreign missionaries whom I came across in the Katanga district one and all assured me that they did not wish to see any other flag over the Congo except the one already floating there? Is it possible that the English Mission

at Lake Mwero, the Missions along the Tanganyika, and the very large Mission at Baudouinville, which cares for between 40,000 and 50,000 natives, could have remained in ignorance of the alleged barbarities had they existed in fact to day? Is it not strange that nobody at any of these institutions could tell me one tale of mutilation? Is it not stranger still that although I went thoroughly over these Missions, seeing hundreds and hundreds of natives of all ages and both sexes, not one single case of mutilation could I discover? Surely it is the victims to mutilation who would be the special care of the missionaries, and is it not absolutely certain that if the barbarities alleged were taking place in the Congo to-day, or had even been taking place up to a recent date, I must have seen some of the victims?

As regards the native population's "moral and material conditions of existence," I can honestly say I found no lack of population in any of the villages through which I passed. In fact, the population showed every sign of increase, for in many quite small villages it was no uncommon thing to see forty or fifty babies ranging in age from one day to one month. This is scarcely what one expects to see in a country such as the Congo is supposed to be.

I saw no sign of poverty or starvation amongst any of these people, and I just stepped into their everyday life, unexpectedly and informally, with no officious Belgian officer to hide from me things that were better not seen. Often I turned out of my course to visit a village where they had not even heard that a white woman was coming, and so long as I did not need any porters the able-bodied men, as well as the women and children, would come out and surround me.

The more I now read, therefore, about Belgian atrocities in the light of my own Congo experience, the more convinced do I become that this reign of blood and mutilation must be some chapter of bygone history, raked up by persons whose emotional qualities considerably outweigh their discretion and sense of fair play.

Again I repeat that the mutilations in the Katanga district and the North must have been stopped many years ago, since it would have been absolutely impossible to stamp out all traces of such atrocities in the nine months that elapsed between the publication of the book I am discussing and my arrival in the Congo.

Having mentioned the missionaries, let me add that one—an Englishman—whom I met had been in the Congo twenty-five years, during which time he had not remained in one place, but had done his share of travelling; and yet he could not speak too highly of the Belgian officials. The only criticism he could make was to the effect that he wished there were more officers in the Congo, instead of the civilians who were usually sent out; but he supposed that for some unknown reason the soldiers feared the climate. Compare this remark, from one who has lived in the Congo a quarter of a century, with the hysterical howlings of the anti-Congolese publicists in this country.

What possible compensation can Europe ever make to these unhappy wards whom she has abandoned to what a Belgian judge from the Congo has described as the "most relentless and most hateful tyrants that have ever disgraced the name of humanity!"

The Belgian judge who spoke thus must either

have been referring to some bygone epoch in Congolese history, or else to some district other than the Katanga. The judges whom I met in the Congo were just as ready to take the word of a native as that of a white man, and there was quite a commotion at Elizabethville, when I was there, about this very matter. People complained that black men were being treated too much on a level with whites.

With regard to the "hateful tyrants" referred to above, I would remind readers that if a black man is beaten by a white, he has only to go to the Boma and report the case, and the white man is punished. You may say that I beat black men without being punished or fined; but this was in the bush, where discipline must be maintained if you ever mean to reach the end of your journey. To be too lenient with insubordinate natives in such circumstances would be simply inviting disaster, and if I had allowed my porters to travel at their own pace through the bush I should still be *en route!*

So much for some of the most striking remarks that appear in this most striking Introduction over the name of a very well-known man of letters. Before considering the book itself, I would like to mention a little incident which set me thinking at the time it happened, and which shows the anti-Congolais in a new light.

Having decided to enter the Congo, I wrote home to a friend of mine, a West End doctor, telling him of my intention and asking him to find out whether, on my return, I could utilise my notes and photographs by giving lectures or writing up the notes for publication. My friend wrote to an eminent anti-

Congolais, saying that a lady was going into the Congo, and asking the questions which I have mentioned, and received a letter in reply to the effect that there was nothing financial to be made out of such material, but that if I would send my notes and photographs on to another well-known gentleman, whose name he mentioned, the individual named would use them *politically!*

When this letter was sent on for me to read I confess it filled me with astonishment to find that the books I had been reading so diligently were written for political reasons. Judging by their lofty (not to say "high falutin") tone, I had always imagined that they had been published for the CAUSE, or in the interests of Humanity, but never for mere political purposes. However, having thus by chance learned their real *raison d'être*, it remained for me to puzzle out just what the political reasons might be; and I now venture to suggest that other people should also turn their attention to this problem.

Again, the airy statement that there is nothing financial to be made out of one's travels (if in the Congo) would lead one to imagine that writers on this subject work for sheer love of the thing. I did my best to believe this, until the other day my illusion was shattered when I read how a prominent anti-Congolese writer received a cheque for a very large sum of money in recognition of his services on behalf of the Congo natives.

One of these services consisted of a lecture delivered in Brussels recently on the subject of Belgian administration in the Congo. This, every one will admit, was an excellent idea, and after what the gentleman had committed himself to on paper, a

sensational and moving speech might have been looked for. Strange to tell, however, not one word was said about Belgian brutality, although on this side of the water the gentleman is popularly pictured as boiling with indignation over the alleged brutality of Belgian officialdom!

Turning now to the "Foreword" of the book which we are considering, we read that its primary object is to "convey a conviction" that Britain cannot afford to be beaten in the struggle against the Slave System of the Congo, and also that—

> It is an attempt to bring home to the public what the present state of the Congo question is. . . . To make it clear that the issue is not merely concerned with securing good government for the present generation of Congo natives, but with saving the great equatorial region of Africa from utter destruction.

This is plain enough, in all conscience, and I submit that any reasonable being who reads such statements must come to the conclusion that the great equatorial region of Africa is *at the present time* being crushed out of existence by methods of shameless slavery. The writer may genuinely believe what he says to be true; but I, having just returned from the very region of which he writes, tell him unhesitatingly that the districts of Central Africa through which I passed a few months ago are in no danger of destruction, let alone "utter" destruction, either as regards their human population, their game, or the natural products of the soil. To paint such highly-coloured pictures in "an attempt to bring home to the public what the present state of the Congo question is" simply amounts to deceiving credulous people in this country, who lack

either the means or the inclination to go out to the Congo and find out the truth for themselves.

Again, on page 18, we read: "The year 1909 draws to its close and the prospect shows no change." What could be more utterly misleading? Did the writer visit the Congo during the year 1909 to assure himself of the truth of such a sentence before writing it, or are there mysterious "political" reasons which make it desirable for this country to go on regarding its Belgian neighbours as a lot of incarnate fiends?

It may surprise this writer of sensationalism to learn that, if necessary, the traveller can obtain porters at the Lado Enclave who will accompany him to the Katanga; and that I have myself passed many porters doing this journey, without soldiers or white men to look after them. These "oppressed" natives marched under a capito who was just as lazy as themselves, and "the system which denies to them all human liberties" (p. 20) allows them to potter along the roads, resting when they like and taking their own time—a truly novel aspect of this "modern slave trade"!

> Atrocities have bulked large in popular imagination. It was right and proper that they should. And do not let us forget them, now that in the greater part of the Congo the population is so broken, so diminished, so poverty-stricken that it no longer pays to terrify the countryside by deeds which have left an indelible stain upon European civilisation in the Dark Continent.

What does the writer mean? He has said a few pages back that the year 1909 draws to its close and the prospect shows no change, whereas now we are told that atrocities no longer pay, and therefore, pre-

sumably, are no longer perpetrated. The two statements are contradictory; he cannot have it both ways; either the atrocities are, or are not, still being committed. If the former, why qualify his accusation thus? If they are already a thing of the past, why may we not be allowed to forget them?

I went to the Congo with his words ringing in my ears. I visited posts and villages spread out over an area of two thousand miles, and more; and one of the things that particularly struck me at the posts was the kindness of the Belgian officials towards native women and children. In many cases these alleged monsters had even adopted a number of pretty native children. I can confidently say that of all the European people whom I saw out there the Italians, not the Belgians, were the most inclined to cruelty towards natives. At two places only throughout the Congo did I see a chicotte, and it must always be remembered that I did not appear amongst these men as an inquirer into their system of administration, but as a big-game shooter, nothing more. All their directions to me had reference to the best game districts, and their advice as to the villages where I could camp was always given with a view to the shooting adjacent thereto.

I pass on to page 24 and read—

> Let us remember that if mutilation and such-like abominations are not carried out on a systematised scale to-day, because it has become unnecessary for the end in view, that the lash and the hostage-house, the deadly grinding slavery relieved by occasional massacre, termed "fighting," remain.

Another admission which contradicts the author's former statement about the year 1909 showing no change, followed by a fresh libel on the Belgian

authorities. The writer's "massacres, termed fighting," remain. They do, but they are not massacres at all, as any one who reads my account of the "Battle of Nalimlo" can see. These affairs are mere farce; they include neither "fighting" nor "massacre"; the soldiers who take part in them receive instructions to fire into the air, upon which the natives bolt like rabbits. The proceedings remind one of comic opera, and the only question is whether one can catch the chief before he makes off into the bush. The chief, having been captured, is taken off for trial, and his people are left behind unmolested. Has our author any humanitarian hints to offer in this connection? Ought the authorities, for instance, to have left Nalimlo to sally out again upon one of his man-eating expeditions? He has been wrongly informed about these "massacres, termed fighting"—at any rate as they are carried out to-day in that part of the Congo with which I am personally acquainted.

I purposely confine myself to dealing with the country which I have visited, but our author apparently wishes to include the whole of the Congo in his denunciations; at any rate, on page 26, he quotes from a memorial of the Congo Reform Association, in which occurs the sentence: "The system is identical all over the Congo," and lower down from a National Manifesto which appeared in the *Times* in December, 1908, and which states that the freedom of natives can be secured only by legislative action which shall restore to them the power to trade freely in the produce of the soil.

The natives do trade freely in the produce of the soil, and I saw no small amount of this trading done during my journey. They accepted money or what-

ever else the people passing through carried with them. I myself bought food at pretty nearly every village through which I passed. I bought chickens, eggs, vegetables, flour for my porters, and all these commodities were the products of the various villages we visited.

Our author next wrings his hands at the idea of natives going fifteen days' march to collect rubber, and quotes how out of a band of fifty only twenty-five or thirty returned home ; the women, it appears, have "to leave their villages, and with their children follow their husbands into the forests to convey to them food from the plantations."

In the Katanga traders engage natives by the day or month, and they are paid so much for the job. They go not only for fourteen days, but sometimes for several months, during which time food is easy to buy and very cheap. For one cent a man can get enough bananas to last him two or three days, and he of course receives money beforehand to spend during his journey. Before my porters left any post I always gave them enough money to buy food for the whole journey ; any meat that I was able to obtain for them was of course a treat which depended on luck.

Porters are sometimes killed by leopards, but, on the other hand, it must be remembered that very few men go about without spears, which they know very well how to use. They will kill not only leopards but elephants with these weapons.

Our author appears to think that leopards and starvation account for large numbers of natives while on Government service, and that their women undergo all kinds of privations while following the men ; but in the districts of which I am able to speak I repeat

that natives can get plenty of food without the women taking it out to them, and as a rule the women are left behind in the villages. Those who do follow their husbands must certainly be prepared to undergo a certain amount of hardship; any one who travels through the bush must do so. I camped out for weeks at a time in the bush, surrounded by all kinds of dangers, besides the inclemency of the weather, but managed to survive, and surely natives are better able to withstand these things than a white person?

As for the starvation theory, I can honestly say that I never once saw any natives who bore the faintest resemblance to starving persons.

From what I have already said, is it not fairly apparent that some unaccountable mistake has been committed by writers who attempt to represent the Congo of to-day as one great charnel-house, in which the remnant of Central Africa's native population writhes in its death struggle? Ought not even would-be humanitarians to inquire carefully into actual present-day conditions before applying their sweeping condemnations to the whole of so vast a country as the Congo? If their accusations are not true of the Katanga—and they are not—may they not have been misled as to other districts? What are we to think of such authorities?

CHAPTER XVII

THE CONGO AND ITS CRITICS (*continued*)

THE fundamental qualities of human nature are much the same the wide world over, as any one who has travelled knows; and in tropical countries some of these characteristics are particularly pronounced. Thus, the natural laziness of mankind becomes, in the case of coloured natives, a ruling passion, and those of the Congo are no exception to this rule. Any one possessing even a moderate experience of black labour knows that these people will not work of their own accord. In other words, unless the native is *compelled* to work he will not do so, and one of the devices adopted by civilised nations in their dealings with him is to tax him, in order to get at least *some* work done. England, amongst others Powers, has recognised this necessity, and that is why our natives in Rhodesia are taxed by their governors.

In the Congo there are similar taxes, and in the Katanga last October (1910) a hut tax was started. From my personal observations I have no hesitation in saying that if the natives of the districts through which I passed were to work *four months* in the year, they would be able to spend the remaining

eight months in idleness so far as taxes are concerned; but as things are, the men work for a few days and then bolt into the bush. If therefore an Act were brought in that a native must work these four months, all would be well; for how are white people to live in the Congo, or in any other tropical country, if they cannot get native labour?

For my own part, I was very much astonished at the kindness of the Belgian officials to natives, and in no country under British control would black men be permitted to approach whites on such a footing of easy-going informality.

In the Katanga, from whence "tales of systematic bloodshed" were supposed to be emanating in 1909, the conditions of labour are clear and precise. For every native whom you employ you must take out a licence, and it is quite on the cards that he will desert you after only a few days' work. Then later on he will suddenly appear before the magistrate and demand a month's wages from you—for work which he has never done. A correspondence then ensues between the magistrate and the European employer, the former demanding payment of the wages alleged to be due, and the latter pointing out the true facts of the case. Thus the native makes use of the law in order to defraud his would-be employer. Again, if a white man beats him a native will go three or four days' march to report the fact, and the white man invariably has to pay a fine, which is surely a just enough interpretation of the law.

It has been said over and over again that the natives are not free, but in July, 1910, the country was opened to traders of all nationalities, and when

I was in the Congo these men were pouring in and engaging natives, as one would engage labour in any other country, to go with them as porters on their trading expeditions through the interior.

Months before the throwing open of the country, however, some of these traders were already in the Congo, trading for rubber, &c., with the natives, and when I arrived in Elizabethville I saw in one room tons of rubber that had been brought in a few days after the Act had come into operation. If the Belgian officials disliked Europeans coming into the country so much, how did they come to allow all these men in? It was obviously impossible for the traders to have got all this rubber to Elizabethville, except by entering the Congo before the Act was in force, since the rubber district nearest to Elizabethville is *several weeks' march away!*

The poor downtrodden natives had been trading freely enough with these European traders of different nationalities, and it is a well-known fact that they have stores of ivory and rubber hidden away which they will produce for trading purposes with any one who passes through their villages and treats them decently.

The Belgian Jesuit, Father A. Vermeersch, wrote in 1908: "To whom belongs the rubber growing on the lands of the Congo natives? To the natives and to none other, unless by their consent and with just compensation." The native sells his rubber of his own free will, and the price agreed between him and the traders is surely "just compensation" if the native be satisfied. The author of "Great Britain in the Congo" supplements the above quotation with the remark that the object of European

rule on the Congo since 1891 has been that of pillaging its natural wealth to enrich *private interests in Belgium.* This is one of those exceedingly stupid assertions of his which he contradicts later on in his book by admitting what I here state, namely, that *English* Firms have very large monetary interests in the Katanga and also numerous concessions. Why should he go out of his way to make out that *Belgian* private interests alone benefit from the Congo?

"The Congo territories are still being pillaged, ruthlessly and systematically," he writes. And once more I must contradict him by pointing out that trading is not pillage, and that traders from all over Europe are to-day dealing with the natives just as they do in other parts of the world.

Again, we read—

> The rights of the natives to the produce of their own soil . . . are taken from them and vested in aliens living thousands of miles away. The natives cease to be owners of property and cease to be economic units. . . . The natives are systematically robbed of their natural wealth and of their power to enrich themselves by trade and labour.

The produce of the soil is not taken from the natives; it is bought from them. They do go out and collect rubber, but they are paid for it in whatever form they desire, whether it be money or goods. The Congo native knows the value of money, and woe betide the trader who offers him a one-franc piece when it ought to be two! The man will put the coin down, pick up his goods, and walk off. To say that natives are robbed of their power to enrich themselves is to be guilty of a terminological inexactitude. I have seen rich natives; how did they

become rich, if the power to do so was taken from them?

How could a man like Kateti, with his nine wives, bring in food for 600 or 700 porters within a few hours (as he did), if he were not rich? Was the food taken from him? No, he was paid in money, cloths, blankets, &c. I saw it with my own eyes. Then, how about the chieftainess at Bobandana, with her 3,000 head of cattle? Does this look as though the products of their own soil were vested in aliens? No, there are many natives who own numerous sheep and goats, while others have really big herds of cattle.

We find, therefore, that the natives have *not* ceased to be owners of property, and in some respects, such as the question of land, they please themselves. Thus, when a chief dies and a new chief comes into power, he invariably moves his village on two or three miles. What does the Belgian Government do? Does it come down and exterminate his people, as one might expect after reading the effusions of alarmist scribes? Not a bit of it; the authorities take not the slightest notice of such a thing. Yet any one who had not visited the Congo might well be excused for imagining that it is more than a chief's life is worth to occupy fresh land in this manner.

We now come to a short description of what the other Great Powers are doing for natives, which is intended to throw into relief the barbarous methods of Belgium in the Congo; and this is how our author puts it—

> They [other Powers] have assisted and encouraged the native to harvest the natural produce of his forests and his plains;

to collect his rubber and his gum copal, his palm oil and his palm kernels; to cultivate his cocoa, his ground nuts, maize and cotton for export. . . . They are now teaching him to improve his methods of cultivation and preparation . . . helping him to understand that not only his actual prosperity but his future welfare are bound up in his land and its fruits.

This might well have been written of the Belgians in the Katanga! The remarks apply most aptly, not only to the Katanga indeed, but as far north as the Lado Enclave. What is more, it must be perfectly obvious to any one who travels through that country to-day that these efforts to improve the condition of natives have been going on for some time. I have seen hundreds of natives coming into the posts to trade, and when trading the native has no fear of the chicotte, which has no part in the transaction. They came in fearlessly, and if the prices did not suit them, picked up their goods and went.

The natives are encouraged in every way to cultivate their lands. Seeds are forwarded from Europe and supplied by the Government to them, and they are taught how to cultivate all the European vegetables. I have been into a native village in November and found a quarter of an acre of land devoted to the cultivation of strawberries, and wherever I went European potatoes were obtainable. How did the native get his European potatoes and other vegetables? He got them from the Government—the Government which is popularly supposed to starve him of flour, and yet permits him to grow strawberries! But the poor starving native is an illusion; his land is well cultivated, and I have even bought such things as

tomatoes, pineapples, and oranges from him before now. Belgium, like the other Powers, is doing her best for her Congo wards.

Our author's remarks anent the "land question" are somewhat mystifying, and it would be interesting to know what effect they leave upon the mind of any ordinary person who has not visited the Congo. He begins by saying that the "appropriation on paper by a number of gentlemen sitting in Brussels, of hundreds of thousands of square miles in the African tropics, is an absurdity. . . . The Belgian Government cannot occupy the land . . . It does not do away, in fact, with native ownership in the land!"

Exactly! It does not, so why all this fuss? We read on and learn that "the position in the Congo will not be changed until the Belgian Government ceases to treat, in practice, the produce of the land as ITS property, and ceases to compel the native population to harvest that produce for the joint benefit of itself and its financial partners."

It was this compulsion of the natives and appropriation of the produce of the land by Belgium that I sought for in vain, but continuously, throughout my Congo journey. Whenever a chief came in I got my boy to question him fully, but not one of them had a word to say against the Belgian officials. If these natives were perpetually robbed, and were forbidden to trade, one might reasonably expect to find such a disgraceful state of things considerably aggravated in the interior of the country, where the wretched people would certainly know nothing about money or its value. What did I find? In remote Central Africa a chief asks me for a shilling with the

head of English Edward on it! How did he know anything of money if he had never been accustomed to its use, I wonder?

What the author seems to be striving after I found already accomplished. The natives use the land and its produce, both as regards cultivation and game. They are allowed old-fashioned rifles, and if they care to shoot, or fish, they may do so, and the spoils of the chase are their own, either to consume or to sell, according to inclination. The Government *pays* the native for the rubber he collects from lands which he would not trouble to visit otherwise; but I cannot see how any one could be expected to understand this from a perusal of our author's writings.

He quotes some remarks about the "Bafoto," or little hunters, to the effect that these people *used* to send toll in the shape of skins and tusks to the tribe over whose lands they hunted "before the great confiscation of lands and produce by the State." These particular remarks apply to the territories within the Lopori and Maringa basins, which I have not yet visited; but in the forests between Kassendi and Beni the "Bafoto" still hunt elephants, and *still send in tusks to the chiefs as toll.* The State claims one tusk of every elephant shot or killed, but does not get it; the chief waits till he has received a number, then he brings them in and sells them to the Belgian officials, the Government getting in reality just half what it claims.

Then we learn that the native tribes are often driven to civil war, because, when they can no longer obtain rubber from their own lands, they

are driven to invade the land of another tribe, and wild fights for rubber result. The tribe that fails to produce the proper quantity of rubber falls a victim to the Belgian official and his soldiers, who seize women and children, and inflict all kinds of torture as punishment. I am glad to say that this sort of thing does not go on in the districts I visited. There natives do not destroy one another in a scramble for rubber, neither are women and children seized and tortured by a brutal soldiery, under an equally brutal Belgian official.

On the contrary, the soldiers there are kept under strict control, being so severely punished if they touch a native man, woman, or child, that such offences are exceedingly rare. Fines, imprisonment, or the chicotte are the penalties for this sort of crime, and soldiers dread the chicotte as the devil dreads holy water.

A statement referring to the Lukolela district, quoted by our author, reads: "Even when white men shot buffaloes or antelope it was the custom to give one limb to the chief of the village concerned." Is the reader to understand that this is no longer the custom in the Congo? It is still the custom in the Katanga, and I always gave the chief concerned some part of the animal shot on his land. He would come in for it, as his recognised right; are we to understand that the custom has been definitely abolished in the Lukolela district to-day?

"Deprived of his land the native dies." Under this heading the author sets out to paint a picture which, if true of to-day, would mean the rapid and early extinction of the native races. He begins by describing the superhuman exertions of the native

in connection with the cultivation of the land, but omits to state that it is the *women* who do this kind of work. Assuming that it takes the *men* all their time to look after the land, it is easy enough to pile on the agony by describing how these industrious fellows are torn away from their labours and set to "gather the produce of the soil of commercial value on the world's markets" for their brutal European masters. Arguing on this false basis, the obvious conclusion is that the natives are being starved out of existence, or, in the more flowery periods of our author, "the European rulers of the Congo deprive the native of the means of adequately providing for his own sustenance."

What a pity other readers cannot see, as I have so often seen, these poor starving native men sitting round smoking and chatting while their women worked like navvies on the fields! Surely at this time of day it should be generally known how the women of Central Africa have to work for their men; and I have never been able to see what harm there is in making these lazy fellows do a bit of work too—for which, mark you, they are paid! While the women are working like slaves why should not their husbands and sons be employed as porters, or rubber gatherers, so long as they are paid for their work? They are a lazy set of scoundrels, in all conscience, and I am quite sure that the women would make infinitely better porters, if they had the necessary strength. They at least are accustomed to work; but the men—experience alone can convince you of their colossal indolence!

However, having thus presented the native man as a sort of tropical "hustler," who is always longing

to get back to his work on the land, as a New York stockbroker might yearn for "the House" when other business called him thence, our author next proceeds to fill in the background of his picture with a multitude of fearsome shapes, to whom any reader of anti-Congolese literature must by now have become thoroughly accustomed. I mean the soldiers, their women, their camp followers, "probably not less than 100,000 souls," as he says. "This army must be fed, and the natives have to feed it." No wonder indignation has been aroused in this country when we get this last straw laid upon the wretched native's already breaking back. "How, in Heaven's name," we ask ourselves, "can the native feed himself, let alone this army of hungry locusts?"

Of course the thing would be absolutely impossible, if conditions in the Congo were to-day what they have been represented to be. Considering that these things are supposed to have been happening (presumably all over the Congo) for the last twenty years, it is an absolute certainty that long ere this the native population would have been wiped out, must have sunk under the overpowering load of cruel oppression heaped on them by their inhuman Belgian masters.

The facts, as I *saw them*, are almost as startling, in a different way, as these wild and hopelessly exaggerated general statements which I have been reluctantly compelled to quote.

From what has already been written by me the existence of rich natives has, I venture to hope, been proved. I have also described how on more than one occasion I passed through vast tracts of

splendidly cultivated ground. It took me three days to march through the cultivated land between Rutcheru and Vitshumbi, where game and fish were also plentiful; and, as I have already said, the produce of the soil, when not used by the natives themselves, was *sold* to the Belgians.

But although some of the produce thus sold is of course, consumed by the soldiers, these men are NOT fed by the natives, as our author would have us believe. It may come as news to him when I assert that this inhuman Belgian Government has actually established a number of cattle ranches in the Congo *for the purpose of feeding its soldiers.* These ranches are looked after by natives, under the supervision of Government officials, and every week cattle are killed for the soldiers' consumption, what is over being given away to any natives who happen to be in the post. Let me hasten to say that the natives employed on the ranches are *paid* to herd the cattle.

The ranches were in full swing when I was in the Congo and contained thousands of head of cattle, and a very popular idea amongst natives was to work near the ranches, with the great object of buying one or more beasts from the Government. A calf could be bought for ten francs, a bullock for fifteen francs, and a sheep for two francs fifty cents, while chickens fetched twenty and thirty cents each.

Now, in the face of this, what is one to say and think about the wild stories of starving natives, who have no time to till their land, and yet must feed the soldiers? How would it be possible to feed soldiers under the conditions pictured by our amiable author? What political reasons can make

it worth anybody's while to allow his facile fancy to lead him so far from the actual facts of the case? Why paint such a grotesque picture of inhuman brutality and allow it to be interpreted as applying to the whole Congo? Is there not such a thing as fair play, even when attacking a foreign Government, and, even though you think you have run up against the devil, should you not give him his due? But in the wild accusations of our author there is no qualification of any sort, and his sweeping assertions leave us breathless and awestruck as we watch him whirled off his feet by the furious tempest of his own indignation!

Listen:—

> Throughout the vast Congo territories he [the native] has been and is dying; dying uselessly, rapidly; dying from want, dying from misery, dying from hopelessness and despair. For the last seventeen years . . . the Congo native has been dying.

Is this not wholesale, all-embracing enough? Is there the slightest doubt as to what sort of a picture such words conjure up in the mind of any one who has not visited the Congo? Is it fair, I again ask, to write thus of "the vast Congo territories" when the picture does not apply to them?

We pass on, and find him dragging in the name of a consul who appears to have supplied tales of horrors galore. It so happens that I met this gentleman's wife on my way home, and she it was who repeated for my benefit her husband's tale of the natives whose heads were used as stepping-stones. By some extraordinary oversight this moving tale is not included in our author's pages. Perhaps the gentleman had not "heard" it in time to have

it included in this book. But I can assure our author that the consul in question possesses plenty of good "copy," stories of atrocities which he "heard of" when in the Kasai district. I myself listened to many of them, as retailed by his wife, and would willingly have included them in this book, were I not so stupidly prejudiced against those words "I heard"!

While we are on the subject of what has been "heard" by people, I may perhaps be allowed to add that sometimes one "hears" tales from the Kasai district which contradict those of the worthy consul. Thus, I met an Englishman and his wife who had just come back from that part, and whose report differed entirely from that of the consul. I do not say that their tale was true, but I think their word is probably as much to be believed in as that of the consul.

This gentleman has "let himself go" in a White Book after a manner dear to the heart of our author, who, after reading it, is able to tell us that the population has been disarmed; that the natives must supply the soldiers with women, food, and housing; while it appears that "many of the capitas (corporals) told me (the consul) they had orders not to allow the natives to clear the ground for cultivation, to hunt, or to fish. . . . The natives can only comply with the demands made upon them by utilising the labour of the women and children."

The Kasai region must be a desert, if this state of things really prevails there. There is nothing like it in the Katanga and the North, where the natives still carry and use their spears—no ineffective weapons in skilled hands. They do not have

to supply the soldiers either with food, housing, or women; but, yes, they certainly do "utilise the labour of women and children," and have done so from time immemorial. As for the worthy consul's "capitas" (corporals), may I remind him that a capito is not a corporal, nor has he anything to do with the army? A capito is a headman, placed in charge of porters by his chief, or an official, and he is held responsible for the loads reaching their destination. A soldier is put over porters when they are on march with soldiers, carrying food, ammunition, &c.

The consul's picture is certainly a black one, but it is a curious thing that the consul's wife could give me absolutely no information as to what, when, and where her husband had *seen* any of these things! Perhaps when I have visited the Kasai I shall be able to supplement his generalities with a few details!

Our author is very angry with the Belgian Colonial Minister for having declared in the Belgian Senate, five months after annexation, that the natives of the Kasai were perfectly free, free as air, and that statements to the contrary were odious calumnies. Well, that is very much what the Englishman and his wife told me when I happened to meet them on their return from the Kasai last year.

Our author opines that the Congo native must have a queer idea of the white man's God, in that his white rulers never grant him a "close time"; and if the wretched men were tortured, as has been asserted, it is scarcely conceivable that they could be led to become Christians. Strange to say, however, large numbers of them are Christians; while

as for their "close time," the native acts up to the proverb "Heaven helps those that help themselves." When he wants a "close time"—he takes it! In fact, he takes it on every possible occasion.

Before finally parting from our admirable consul, with his soldiers, capitas, and woman labour, let me give the result of my own observations as regards soldiers and natives.

I have passed *en route* beween 15,000 and 20,000 soldiers, some followed by their wives, also porters and their wives, and the children of both. I have seen soldiers and villagers lying by the roadside, eating and laughing together, but never a sign of any brutality. The reason for this state of things I have already given, namely, the severe punishment meted out to soldiers who attempt to ill-treat villagers.

As for the villagers having to supply soldiers with women, I would like to point out that there are women of a certain class in every country in the world, and, strange as it may appear, the Congo is no exception to this rule. The villagers are certainly not called upon to do this shameful thing in the districts through which I journeyed.

But then the popular idea of the native, as he appears in the minds of the anti-Congolese, is wholly incorrect. I can say this with confidence, because I myself had formed my own opinion of him, before seeing him, from reading the books in which his supposedly wretched condition has been set out so eloquently. In the flesh he is essentially cheery, and when one has got over the shock of not finding him what one had expected him to be, it gradually dawns on one that he is actually a downright happy individual.

I saw him under a good many varying conditions, and for any one to talk about him as being starved, ill-treated, and exterminated is—not to put too fine a point on it—to talk nonsense.

But this by the way. Let us now follow our author through the further mazes of his eloquence before drawing our own deductions, and leaving the case for the unprejudiced consideration of a mystified public.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE CONGO AND ITS CRITICS (*concluded*)

A FAVOURITE grievance amongst anti-Congolese writers exists in the fact that our Foreign Office has from time to time suppressed Congo Reports, and that both of our great political parties have done this does not soothe the agitators' feelings in the least. Our author feels convinced that these suppressed reports contain charges of a very serious character, and he is rather severe upon our rulers for not having made public the documents in question. I understand him to accuse the leading men on both sides of the House of moral cowardice in this connection when in power, and he appears to be quite convinced that it was their duty to publish all the suppressed Reports. He will admit of no explanation except the one he himself puts forward, and even labels the suppression of Reports as an "error."

Reading his remarks after my return from the Congo, I have been forcibly impressed by the possibility that he may be wrong in his deductions. Surely after regarding the Congo question from one fixed standpoint for so many years, as he has done, his sense of proportion may have become rather dis-

torted. I cannot help feeling that this is so, when I compare many of his assertions with what I saw in 1910 out there on the spot.

He tells us what our Ministers ought to have done, but a responsible Minister cannot permit himself quite so much freedom of action as can a writer, however sincere. Evidence must be unimpeachable before it receives the hall-mark of official sanction, and I suggest that a complete and satisfactory answer has been given to the complaints made by our author. As he has himself admitted in the book that lies before us, an official explanation *has* been made, and this by no less a personage than Lord Lansdowne, who has said that the reports were "founded upon hearsay and lacked the authority of personal observation," while some of them "were of old date."

"Founded upon hearsay"! A responsible Minister of the Crown has said so, but our author labels the remark an "error!" Why? It is the precise point that has always struck me when in conversation with some of the gentlemen who have made reports on the Congo. Here is the pith of the whole matter in a nutshell. Are we, or are we not, to admit "hearsay" evidence in a case of such gravity? The official reply is "No"; does our author think otherwise?

I myself had the pleasure of meeting a certain vice-consul in the Katanga, and took the opportunity of asking him a number of questions about some of his statements in connection with the Congo—statements which have been published and widely read. His replies astounded me; they were all in the same strain. "I *heard*" this, that, and

the other; never "I saw"! To the most precise and definite questions I could obtain nothing beyond these indefinite "hearsay" indictments; and yet this is the kind of thing the reading public is asked to swallow, without question, while the carefully considered opinion of a highly placed Minister is to be dismissed lightly as an "error"!

How could the British Government possibly act on "hearsay" evidence without making the British nation the laughing-stock of the world? To make blood-curdling reports about a remote land is easy enough, if one be content with "hearsay," and I could myself have strung together some truly sensational stories, founded on this intangible basis, and repeated by Germans and others who had not, I imagine, met with as much success at trading as they had hoped! But to have repeated this tittle-tattle would have been to present an entirely false view of the actual state of things which I saw with my own eyes in the country; for, in my opinion, it is a grave error to allow "hearsay" to outweigh ocular evidence.

Again our author harps upon the "forced-labour" string, quoting as follows from the Report of the Congo Government:—

> It is therefore only by making of work an obligation that the native will be made to furnish regular labour. . . . The native only understands, only respects force: he confounds it with justice. The State must be able to ensure the triumph of law, and, consequently, force the native to work.

It must, indeed; but, in practice, this so-called "forced labour" is not by any means what a great many worthy stay-at-home people believe it to be. I have seen a good deal of "forced labour," and

can assure all who are interested in the subject that the native works at his own pace, and when feeling bored simply bolts into the bush, after which you see him no more. When in want of labour the Belgian officials go to a village, taking with them cloths, salt, copper wire, &c., as payment. They collect the young men of the village together, and tell them where they are to go in a certain number of days. They hand over a proportion of the wages on the spot, and depart. No soldiers are left in charge of the men, some of whom turn up on the appointed day, while others do not. If those who have shirked are caught afterwards they are punished, as they have simply practised a system of theft upon the white man by taking payment and then not putting in an appearance. The same thing is done in other parts of Africa which do not belong to Belgium, and, at the risk of being wearisome, I must repeat once more that the native will *not* work unless he is made to do so.

Extracts from Consular Reports are quoted in our author's book, but why some of the statements are reproduced I do not know, unless it be on the theory that any stick is good enough to beat a dog with. "Every white man has his *ménagère*," for instance. Are untravelled readers to understand that the Congo is the only black country where this sort of thing goes on? If so, they will be labouring under a delusion. "There is now a large class of idle, roving females in every station." I cannot agree as to their idleness, my observations having shown me that they do a considerable amount of work in the way of cooking and other domestic

duties. "It is pitiful to see the strings of poor naked women, coming in from the villages with great loads of wood, bananas, thatching, &c., while these gaily-dressed persons strut about doing nothing."

It may be pitiful, but it is a custom of the country and a recognised institution, which has nothing to do with the white man's rule. Long before the European set foot in Africa the native women were accustomed to do what we consider men's work, and in a country where a string of beads constitutes a popular costume I do not fancy that the nudity of the women is regarded as a hardship by the ladies themselves. Some of them may, in fact, even despise "the gaily-dressed persons" who "strut about doing nothing"!

One gentleman commits himself to the statement that "there exists a sentiment of widespread hatred against the white man." If so, it is very cunningly concealed. When I was travelling with the trader the natives would often come into camp and ask a hundred and one questions about the country through which he had passed. Hatred against the white would have impelled them to avoid us, I should have imagined.

One would certainly gather that the benefits of the law were entirely withdrawn from natives when reading our author's pages. As a matter of fact, the magistrates go out on circuit from time to time and listen to all complaints of the people; nor do they hesitate to punish the Belgian official who may have wronged either man or woman.

For theft or, in the case of soldiers, for insubordination the white man is allowed to give the

native twenty-five strokes with the chicotte, and no more; but if the native considers his punishment unjust, he complains to the magistrate when the latter comes to the post, and the white man has to stand his trial. I have myself seen a soldier refuse to be beaten, saying he would wait for the magistrate's arrival, and the white man had to wait.

Very interesting and very true are the author's remarks about reforming the state of things which he believes to exist in the Congo at the present time. He very justly observes that the Belgian Government could not be expected to remove all these evils in a year or two years or five years. He declares that such a task "would take an Administration a generation at the very least;" and that "to have required the Belgian Government to perform this miracle in a few short months would have been absurd."

He never wrote a truer sentence in his life! If the horrors which he describes had been going on even five years ago, traces of them must have remained up to the present day. He believed in their existence in September, 1909; he believed that they were going on all over the Congo, else how could he allow that sentence in the Introduction to his book to stand! ". . . from the Lado Enclave, from the Katanga . . . comes exactly the same tale of systematic bloodshed"? It was obviously his genuine belief that the country was being drenched in blood; and I tell him he has been misinformed.

From Elizabethville to Baudouinville, from Uvira to the Lado Enclave, I travelled on foot and by bicycle a few short months after his burning words

had been given to the world, and I assert solemnly that no traces of that systematic bloodshed are to be discovered. If the bloodshed took place it must, according to his own words, have taken place a generation ago at the very least. To-day the traces of these horrors have been wiped out; the native population is leading a normal life; the Government is behaving as other civilised Governments behave in tropical countries, no better and no worse. It does not crush the native as we have been led to suppose, but attempts to save him from the results of his own ignorance, with a fair amount of success. Moreover, it must be obvious to any one who visits the country with an impartial mind that this state of things has been in existence for a number of years—at any rate in the Katanga district.

The native is, of course, an obstinate fellow, who can do things with impunity that would kill a white man. He will drink all kinds of water, for instance, with no apparent ill effects afterwards. He will also go and live in the sleeping-sickness districts, in spite of official warnings against this course of action. As I have before said, it is often necessary to burn down his dwelling in order to drive him out of the dangerous area. Again, he has been warned and warned and warned not to go down to the Tanganyika, but still he insists upon going there to fish. It has been asserted that he is not allowed to fish. I have seen him bring his catch into the posts and receive payment for it.

Belgium makes a profit out of the Congo, and the fact seems to annoy the anti-Congolese; but I suggest that the running of colonies is not a purely philanthropic affair even in this enlightened day, and

that if it was, the big trading nations of the world would have shed their possessions long since. There is naturally a big profit to be made out of the exchange of rubber and ivory for cloth, wire, and money with a native population. The native's requirements are few, and if both parties to a deal are satisfied surely trading may be continued along those lines? If you gave a sovereign to the ordinary native he would not know what to do with it; if you give him two francs he goes off to the nearest trading station and buys beads; on the other hand, it is not impossible for him to grow rich, and some of his fellow-countrymen do so, as I have shown.

With wearisome reiteration our author harps upon the string of "forced labour," mentioning, in the present instance, the Kilo Gold Mines as being thus worked by the Belgian Government. Let me add the information that the copper and gold mines, also the railway in the Katanga, are worked in a similar manner; but, horrible to relate, 95 per cent. of the labourers are natives *from North-Eastern Rhodesia*. They enter the Congo to work, with the consent of the Chartered Company, and I ask any reasonable being, Is it likely we would allow our own natives to take up such work if the alleged dreadful atrocities in the Congo really took place? Of course we would not do such a disgraceful thing.

No, the further we go into the question of "Congo Atrocities," the plainer do the facts of the case stand out. The splendid enthusiasm of the anti-Congolese writers in the cause of humanity has blinded their eyes to the value of evidence, and they have so far overshot their mark as to cause level-headed people

serious misgiving. Had their statements been qualified in any way, had they admitted some slight improvement in recent years, had they expressly excepted certain districts from their fierce condemnation, then indeed their assertions must have commanded very serious consideration from all impartial persons.

I thoroughly believed what I read, and went out expecting to find the proofs of their veracity on every side. I found none, and if this applies to one district, how can we be certain that these good gentlemen have been rightly informed about other districts?

I do not for one moment cast a doubt upon the *bona-fides* of these writers. The political and humanitarian reasons which prompted them to champion the black man's cause in Central Africa reflect the greatest credit upon their qualities of heart. No, what has probably happened seems to me to be this: General statements and hearsay evidence referring to a period many years ago have been admitted as applicable to the Congo of to-day, and an overwhelming case, splendidly put forward, but founded on bygone history, has been presented to the public.

If this be so, and I firmly believe it is so, ought we not to be very thankful to our rulers on both sides of the House for having kept their heads during a period of considerable public excitement? It is not difficult to kindle a spark that would set modern Europe ablaze to-day, and to do anything that might bring about such consequences would be wholly unwarrantable, except for very clearly defined and well-founded reasons.

We have now for a number of years been engaged

in vilifying a friendly Government, upon whom we have showered—unofficially, of course—every uncomplimentary epithet to which we could lay tongue. I am not an expert in politics, and the political reasons which have prompted these attacks may have been very weighty—apart altogether from the humanitarian motives, which were, of course, unimpeachable—but it does seem to me that it is now time for a halt to be called, unless we wish finally to alienate Belgian friendship.

While in Brussels some time ago I met a number of prominent Belgians, who told me that a feeling of great bitterness against the British nation was gradually springing to life in their country, on account of the outrageous stories which we are persistently circulating about the Belgian administration of the Congo. For many years Belgium entertained a sincere admiration for England, but by degrees she is turning elsewhere, they told me. "Reluctantly," they added.

Is it to be wondered at? And is it to our best interests that we should make an enemy of a country occupying the position that Belgium occupies on the map? Are there no possible combinations of circumstances that might make a hostile Belgium on our flank a grave danger to our national existence? I cannot presume to answer such questions, but would humbly put them forward for the consideration of those who are better qualified than I am to give them an authoritative answer.

My own particular desire throughout this book has been to present a true and up-to-date picture of everyday life in the Congo as I saw it; and if I am able to blot out at any rate some part of the blood-stained

picture that has been painted by others I shall be well satisfied.

Straws show which way the wind blows, and there are already indications that popular opinion in this country is veering round as regards Belgium and the Congo. Friendly notices have already appeared in the English Press with regard to the new King of the Belgians, and it has been admitted that an improvement has taken place in the condition of the Congo. The same admission has been made by Sir Edward Grey in the House of Commons. Will the anti-Congolese dub this official utterance as an error?

Surely not! Surely it is time to revise the wild accusations of September, 1909, to modify the tone of criticism then adopted? Cut out the Katanga district and away up to the Lado Enclave, where the natives are not dying out; where the Missions cultivate thousands of acres; where the produce of the soil is bought and sold; and where justice is administered impartially. Destroy the bogey of that hungry army, marching like locusts through the land, and, instead, tell of the Government ranches from which meat is obtained twice a week and distributed amongst the soldiers. Write that, when on march, the soldiers are only halted at the big villages where their officers know that food can be bought in sufficient quantities for their men.

Do not write of woman's labour as though this were a custom introduced from Europe, instead of a native institution older than some of the white nations. Do not paint the lazy, grinning black man, with his songs and camp-fire stories, his endless appetite for buck's meat and often surprising sense of

humour, as a miserable starved creature slowly sinking into extinction.

It is not fair to provide such descriptions as these for the consumption of the warm-hearted people of modern Europe, where, by the way, civilisation is starving her own victims, despite the well-considered laws of modern Governments.

The "Atrocities" that loom so large in Europe shrink amazingly when one reaches Africa, where one would expect the country to ring with them. Why are our own natives crossing from East Africa into the Congo, where they often remain, if the reign of blood holds sway to-day? Let us get rid of these grotesque ideas, and having given the anti-Congolese writers every credit for their good intentions, implore them to stop trying to harrow us with these tales of yesterday. Every nation has a past from which certain chapters might be blotted out with advantage; and if Belgium has ill-treated the natives of the Congo in the past let us rejoice that we live in a new era, and at least acknowledge that a change has taken place. Gentlemen who burn to succour the natives cannot do better than subscribe to the campaign against sleeping sickness which is being carried on by Belgium in the Congo. They will be better employed doing this than in blackguarding their neighbours and unconsciously deceiving their friends.

Nothing is easier than to convey a false impression about a black country to those who have never been there. Untravelled whites judge a question like this by the standard prevailing in white countries, but that standard will not fit, and it is useless to pretend otherwise. You cannot treat a native just as you treat the white labourer, and

what would seem brutal to the stay-at-home European, thousands of miles away, is a matter of necessity amongst natives. You must beat them sometimes; there is no getting away from the fact, but every beating is not necessarily "brutal," although it may easily be made to read so on paper. It therefore follows that writers should be careful to state all the circumstances when reporting cases of this kind, where the usages of Africa differ from those of Europe. I have endeavoured to do so when telling of my own dealings with natives, and hope and believe that I have written with fairness in each instance.

Needless to say, in assailing the assertions of the anti-Congolese writers I have not been animated by any personal feelings against them, and trust that I have been able to deliver my attack without being unfair to them. It is difficult to deal with such very sweeping and violent assertions in an altogether gentle manner; but I am quite convinced that the writers in question thoroughly believe what they have written to be true *in toto*. I am equally convinced that they have been misled, and sincerely hope that in future we shall hear no more about the extermination of the Central African tribes or the widespread horrors of Belgian rule.

It is not too late to reclaim the friendship of our South-Eastern neighbours, and I believe thoughtful Englishmen will agree with me that this is a desirable course to follow. At any rate, even were Belgium our bitterest enemy, it would ill become a nation that prides itself on its sense of fair play, as we do, to continue the campaign of calumny that has already gone on far too long against that country.

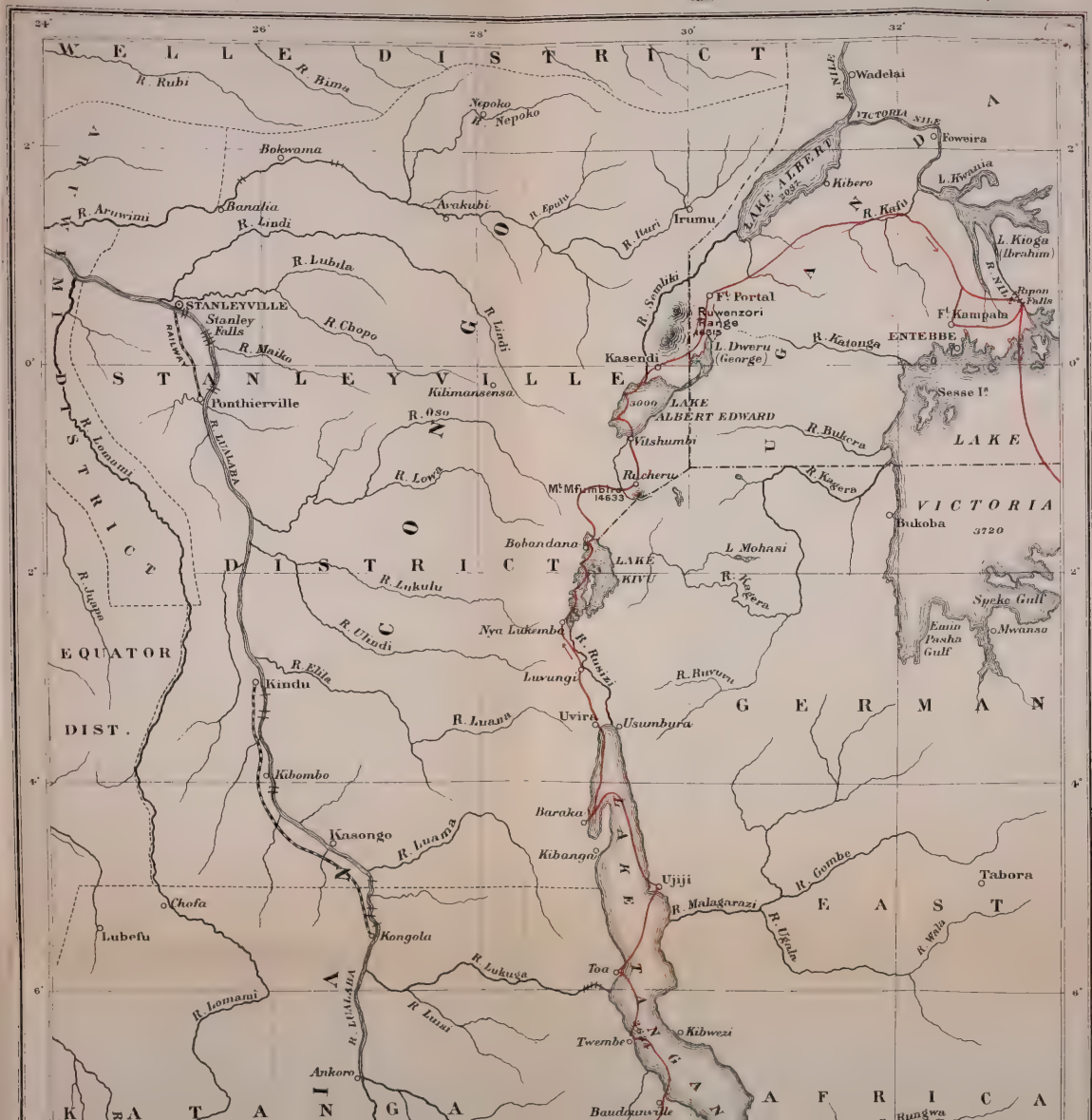
It is conceivable that the coloured man in Central Africa and in other parts of the world would be happier if left entirely to himself; but the march of progress is not to be arrested, and when the conquering white enters a black country labour he must and will have, let the theorists rave as they will. He must make the black man work, and as long as that work is paid for, why should we grumble?

It is certain the black man cannot turn his rubber to proper account, and that traders should pay him a fancy price for it is demanding too much of human nature. After all, the trader himself runs considerable risks during his expeditions, and is surely entitled to a handsome profit in return for his enterprise and grit?

As for paper claims to the land of the Congo, they do not operate out there in practice, and even if such claims were withdrawn their withdrawal would make no difference to the everyday life of the native. He would continue to use the land and its products as he does to-day, paper "claims" notwithstanding.

Finally, let me apologise for the many defects with which, I am sure, this volume must abound. It is my first attempt at such a long literary flight, and in essaying to contradict what I believe to be false I have had to repeat myself on more than one occasion. But it was impossible to do otherwise; the original statements have been repeated again and again, and those who would deny them must deny them repeatedly.

If I have helped to shatter a false idea, then I am content.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INDEX

Albert Edward, Lake, 175, 177, *et seq.*
Albertville, 105

Baraka, 113
Baudouinville, Mission at, 93, 94, *et seq.*
Bobandana, 156, 162
Bolinga, 121, 122, 124, *et seq.*
Boma, 261
Boschoff, 8
Broken Hill, 12, 13, 15
Bulawayo, 11
Bwana Mkuba, 15, 16

Camaneola, Mount, 120, 142, *et seq.*
Cape Town, 5
Chinsenda, 21, 23
Chiwanda, 26
Congo "Outrages," 263, *et seq.*
Contested Boundary, 198, 206, 225
Crater Lakes, 216
Crawford, Mr., 52, 53, *et seq.*
Cubitt, Mr., 197, 215, *et seq.*

Delattre, Lieut., 146, *et seq.*
Durban, 8

Elizabethville, 27

Forced Labour, Experiments in, 125, *et seq.*
Fort Portal, 197, 200; arrival at, 214

Gheur, Committee, 34, 38

Jinja, 256
Johannesburg, 9, 11
Jubuti, 260

Kahele, 81
Kampala, 233, 236, 249, *et seq.*
Kapela, 79
Kassendi 179; arrival at, 192, 200
Kateti, 41, 42, 43
Kilwa, 50
Kiconga, 81
Kivu, Lake, 146
Kolungi, 92

Lava Forest, 162, 164, *et seq.*
Lava Plain, 167, 168
L'Epine, Baron, 112
Lilanda, 25, 26
Livingstone, 13
Lua Laba, river, 58
Luanza, 53
Luembe, 17, 20, *et seq.*
Lukafu, 32, 33, *et seq.*
Lukonzolwe, 51, 82, 84
Lusaka, Catholic Mission at, 89
Luvungi, 132, *et seq.*

Mombasa, Bank at, 254; arrival at, 25
Mpala, 100
Mubende, 236, 243, 245
Mubutwa, 31
Mushidi, 54
Mwero, Lake, 58

Nabukazi, 246
Nairobi, 258
Nalimlo, 157; Battle of, 160, *et seq.*
Nya Lukemba, 145
Nyembwa Kenda, 57

Olsen, Committee, 60, 61, 62

Port Florence, 258
Pweto, 56

Raemdonck, Lieut., 169
Rhodesia, N. E., 20, 21
Riddick, Capt., 226, 227, 229, *et seq.*
Ripon Falls, 256
Rucheru, 168
Russell, Mr., 226, 227, 229, *et seq.*

Sharpe, Sir Alfred, 54
Sleeping Sickness, 108, 119
South Sea Islands, 7, 8
Stairs, Capt., 55
Stanley, 55
Substitut, Mons. Le, 169, 170, *et seq.*; 197, *et seq.*

Tanganyika, Lake, 97, *et seq.*
Tenbwe, 100, *et seq.*
Thomas, 13, *et passim.*
Toa, 105
Toro, King of, 218

Uganda, 243
Ujiji, 106, 107, *et seq.*
Uvira, 113

Victoria Falls, 11, 12
Victoria Nyanza, 255
Vitshumbi, 172

Wangermee, Col., 17

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